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A CERTAIN COUNTRY DOCTOR

J. W. ECHOLS, M. D.

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A Certain Country Doctor



J. W. ECHOLS, M. D.
Frontispiece

A CERTAIN COUNTRY DOCTOR

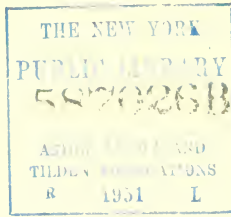
BY

J. W. ECHOLS, M. D.



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*To the Memory of
My Brother*

THOMAS ALLEN HOWELL

*Who was a man among men, this little book is
Affectionately Dedicated*

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Autobiography

John Wilton

Beneath towering pines in a lonely spot down in the eastern part of the State of Texas rests, interred, the pioneers of that community. The first settlers and their children, many of them lie buried there. For fifty years and more have my ancestry peacefully slept in that hallowed spot. Weary and worn of civil strife, broken in health from exposure in war, shattered in fortune from the effects thereof, crushed in spirit as a result of it all, they survived but a short time after the contest between the States. One by one their children, and many of their grandchildren, have answered the last summons, and are sleeping by their side. Near that old burying ground stands a church, octagon in shape; and close by it is a schoolhouse with Masonic Hall above. They were built by the settlers before the Civil War. In that church worshiped my forefathers, and in the schoolhouse were their children taught.

For thirty long years one earnest and beloved minister preached to a community of real neighbors. For that length of time they tilled the soil, friends as well as neighbors, and worshiped together as brothers. The children and grandchildren were christened and married by that venerable disciple; and but once in that long pastorate was a collection taken or money asked for. Three generations removed from the builders of that old church and schoolhouse, it fell to my lot to attend school, and offer my devotions in the church of my fathers, now thirty years ago and more. I heard the farewell sermon, and that first request for a contribution. The congregation stood and sang, while old

men passed the hat. The audience wept aloud as they freely gave of their means. Silver fell in handfuls, and bills of large denomination came as fast. With a well filled purse and the love of every settler, the parson left for the west of Texas. He died soon after arriving at his new home and was buried on the prairies of his adoption. Sentiment rebelled when it learned of his last resting place. Another collection was taken. After a search of many years his grave was located, the body exhumed and returned to its old home, where he slumbers in peace with his comrades. It is my wish to be permitted once more to visit that school, that church and that cemetery; to take my children with me; let them drink of that spring which flowed to quench the thirst of four generations, and in that sacred place relate to them the story of their forefathers. Shaded with elm, pine and dogwood, let me retrace my steps along that winding brook, and again gather the sweet gum from the tree. Yet a little while let me linger, climb once more the little red hill, passing on the laneway until I stand upon the spot where my mother for the first time gazed into the face of her first-born, destined to be a Country Doctor. It is nearly fifty years since then; things will all seem strange. No more will Rover hunt the squirrels, nor Buck, the spotted dog, chase the geese. Grandfather's orchard is gone; no trace of it is there; those green peaches will never colic me again. The hollow tooth I used to have was shed some forty years ago. Sweet gum can make it ache no more. The mullein leaves I used to smoke to cure it are no longer needed. Nell, the old white mule, I wonder if her bones be there? No longer will I fear her kick, nor listen to stories of her depredations. Never again will I be kept indoors because she grazes in the yard. Poor old Ann and Henry Black, the negro servants, I know they are gone long ago; but a sorrow flits across my heart as I

wonder how they fared. Good old souls were they, faithful, good and black; they have gone to their reward. No more will they drench me on catnip tea, neither on castor oil. My colic days are over, likewise worms and croup; but the seed of the Jerusalem oak weed in molasses candy leaves its taste in my mouth to this day.

I would visit also the Houston farm, which joined the old home place; less than a mile I would have to go; he was my kinsman, too. No braver soldier ever shouldered musket than Sam Houston. Relative to him of history, he was in many ways like him,—eccentric, sarcastic, always smiling. He sleeps likewise in that old graveyard. Well do I remember the chinkapin thicket on the brook near his place. May apples were hunted in season, likewise fruit and melons. I helped him gather cotton one day. I got hungry those days; the boiled peas would not stay on the fork until they reached my mouth,—into my lap, on to the floor, bouncing like a rubber ball. Uncle Sam laughed at me, as well as his son Sam, until I crept away through the orchard and potato patch to make my escape. The gap was left down, the hogs got in, and all that remained of that crop was the vines. I never went back to collect for my work.

A little way along that road stood the old mill,—an investment that cost my father the entire amount of his little fortune and sent him back to the farm. With five children scantily clad, a sorry wagon and team, and barely sufficient funds to feed the family on the way, he left the old mill site, never to return. I returned, as we had left the coffee mill on the wall. I was sent back to get it after we had gone a mile or so.

From that time on the grape vine swing and the June bug chase played little part in the life of the one destined to become a Country Doctor. I learned to read and write and something of how to spell from the

old blue-backed spelling book. My finger ran up and down that page upon which was printed the alphabet until it was literally worn out. By the time I had reached "Baker," all preceding pages were in the same condition. McGuffey's First Reader, Holmes' Second, McGuffey's Third and Holmes' Fourth,—this is the way our teacher selected them. A slate and pencil once for all. Three months was a long school term. Farm work lasted all the year. Books were scarce, especially those that might interest a boy. Almanacs were plentiful; farmers would get as many different kinds as was convenient. These I read over and over. The name of many began Dr. So and So's Almanac,—Dr. Merrill's Almanac, Dr. Hostetter's Almanac,—testimonials by hundreds. What awful conditions people could be in; what wonderful results these doctors would get from their medicines! Must be a doctor, a good doctor, like these I read about; cure every case that comes. I would not use their medicines only long enough until I could make my own. I would have a wonderful remedy though, and have a book to tell about it, and that would be Dr. Wilton's Almanac. Every patient cured would have a testimonial in MY book. Me write a book? Well, why not? All I would have to do would be to have my picture on the back, with a snake or a horse, or a pretty girl with long hair, on the other side. The sick people would tell enough to fill the book. These castles loomed before my eyes as I carefully packed and repacked my dozen or so almanacs, together with my schoolbooks, into my cracker box trunk. Rainy days and idle times this would take place frequently in a single day. Once upon a time a weekly newspaper came to the home, and my little world immediately expanded twenty miles or more. Every advertisement was spelled, read and reread. They told of towns and men in other towns, that must be near; of things that happened, and Barum's show, big ele-

phants and lions and curious things. All read about in a paper. From that day my world continued to expand. More books and papers, and I traveled some. Dailies eventually came, and more books. More school days, plans for a permanent vocation. Some personal pride came now. My brogan boots, run down at the heel, were smeared with some dried-out Mason's blacking; my new doeskin jeans pants were folded each



"His Cracker Box Trunk"

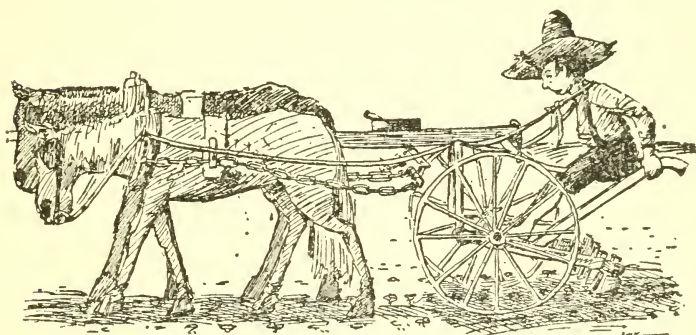
Sabbath evening, and placed in my cracker box with my library. The pants cost one dollar and fifty cents, and I received a new pair each Fall in time for the Christmas holidays. My first white shirt was equally well cared for; made of my father's old one, it was a little large, but, like the negro's proverbial fit, "it went around and hung down." The only collar button in the family was reserved for my father; made of red celluloid, or some composition, it ranked above the cheap bone button. My shirt was carefully tied at the binding with a sewing thread, which answered every

purpose. I resolved, however, to own a collar button as soon as I could earn the money with which to buy one. Collar buttons, and cuff buttons too, would be mine when I became a doctor and cured the multitudes, and had my book published with my name and picture on it. Collars, cuffs and neckties, all would be common things for me to own when Dr. Wilton's Almanac came out. The first money I would get from my medicine sales, I would buy some books and papers, buttons, collars, and ties, and give to the boys who want them so badly, together with as many of my almanacs as they might wish. Boys ought to have a bigger box to keep their things in, than the one usually assigned to them. That will be arranged for too, when my medicines heal the nation.

But things looked different after that; the years flitted by in rapid succession. To the plow handles for a season, back to a country school; hay meadow in summer, school again, and so on, back and forth, until my father's shoes and shirt fit me very well. School-girls of my age began to look good to me; I liked to smell the perfume in the face powder they used; the flowers they wore attracted my attention; verses on candy hearts became interesting. If she smiled when she looked at me, my heart grew faint, and breathing was labored; my knees quivered as the spell crept over my body. I had never experienced such feelings since my recovery from the measles. However, there seemed to be an irresistible desire for another smile, regardless of its alarming effects. The application of soap and water to my neck and ears grew more frequent, and without the suggestion from mother; finger nails received some attention. Long and slender, lank and lean, I grew up like a bean pole, the major portion of me being head and feet. My brother once said of me that "I did very well," considering the fact that I was afflicted with curly hair. Many a galling jest was

indulged in at my expense. "The pretty boy with curly hair," a nightmare to me. No one could say that as brother did. We were the same size, and could wear each other's clothes until nearly grown; often taken for twins. He had received all the original wit and humor of the family, was the life of the household, and could tease me about my hair until I could not look up; but he, too, had a large head and feet, for which I was very thankful.

Rapidly approaching young manhood and expecting



Plow my
"Plow Boy"

to become a doctor, I found that I had little time for frills and fancies. I learned to care for myself better in society in later years, and never gave up entirely the company of young people, although much time was spent in study. The process of becoming a physician was long and tedious. The incubator finally turned me out with more than a hundred more, one fine day in June, back in the early nineties, a typical Country Doctor. A broad brimmed slouch hat, a mustache and side burns that would have flown in the breeze, had there been enough beard on my face to grow them.

The fuzzy outlines of where they might grow some day were neatly stained with whisker dye. The half dozen hairs growing in the middle of my under lip came out quite prominent,—in fact had more of the appearance of being a beard than did all the rest upon my face. A pair of old-fashioned red leather saddle bags, containing all the best remedies, was carried across my saddle. "Loaded for bear," I thought I was a doctor. Iridocyclitis, Cerebrospinal Meningitis, Tuberculosis Pulmonalis and other grave diseases held no terror for me. By proper scientific manipulation, percussion and oskultation, the diagnosis would be made; and after that the treatment would be simple. Five years' hard work, many miles inland, among the most illiterate class of river bottom farmers, trappers, hunters, fishermen and idlers generally, taught me that I was just beginning to learn to be a doctor. From "Pizen" pills, possum and taters, my memory carried me back to mother's pumpkin pies. The half baked bread and sour molasses caused me to yearn for the boarding house hash. "I longed for the fleshpots of Egypt," so to speak, and it dawned upon me that life was too short for me to remain in that locality. My Prince Albert coat had lost its significance. I had learned that hair did not represent brains, therefore I shaved the fuzz all off my brown but youthful face; curly hair had ceased to give me annoyance. The broom-tail ponies I drove were tired of the river roads. All lessons in character reading and human nature were finished so far as that region was concerned. Boiled fat bacon and Populistic argument had ceased to be appetizing; politics and half cooked peas held no further charm for me. I felt that I must go to a new country, but the idea of living in any State but the one of my nativity was revolting. Almost twenty years were required to convince me that Oklahoma was as good as the State of Texas for a home. Landing in Oklahoma

I found my brother, who had preceded me there by several years, most woefully afflicted with an awful attack of "Saving the Country." He was in politics up to his eyes, and had been elected a Senator to the first legislature of the new State of Oklahoma. Now talk about afflictions, that poor man was suffering in the flesh. His anxiety for the welfare of the common people was bearing heavily upon him. Of all the learning in the science of medicine which I had been able to obtain, not a remedy had I for his direful malady; he survived, however, but did not fully recover for some years. One of the unusual effects of his mental anguish resulted in my receiving a commission as prison physician at the largest penitentiary in the State. Here my study of humanity began anew, —with every class of human being upon the face of the earth, born in every country on the globe, as well as in every State in the Union. My labors continued for a period of many years. This experience with more than ten thousand prisoners, most of whom were diseased in more than one way; observation of as many temperaments as prisoners, taken along with their medical treatment, I am still hoping to become, some day, a real doctor.

That brave and fearless woman who came to my rescue many years ago, and promised in the presence of the multitude to take the oversight of me, has faithfully performed her duty. To assume the responsibility and care of an embryo physician is of itself a great undertaking. Steering the bark clear of all danger and hindrance to this day is a creditable feat. Besides keeping the wolf from the door, she had five other excuses for living. While she watches, I shall fear no evil, but continue my journey in search of the knowledge that will constitute me a physician.

Dreams of the almanac with my picture in it have long since vanished. The idea of a remedy which cured

all ailments that mankind is heir to is exploded. In my mind the snake and horses and other pictures that adorned the pages of that wonderful book of remedies have lost their significance. Memories of my library, contained in my cracker box trunk, is all that holds them sacred to me. The rough leather boots with brass toes and run over heel, father's big shirt and my bed-ticking suspenders, were items in my learning; home-knit socks and loud smelling feet were incidental. My hair has ceased to curl, and much of it has ceased to exist. My head and feet got their growth early in life, and my physical stature continued to fill out until fairly well proportioned. Perhaps fate and expended energy will eventually extend my mental capacity until I have become what I most earnestly wish to be—a real doctor.

From his earliest schoolboy days it seemed a foregone conclusion that John Wilton was to become a physician. How or where the idea came from he never knew. At times the matter was referred to with apparent pride, and at other times in jest or indifferently. Just how he would ever acquire sufficient education for a foundation for the profession didn't occur to him in those days. In fact, nothing troubled him much, as in the case of most schoolboys, except that a sudden cold spell came and he would be required to cut more wood than usual to keep the fires going. Of course that is trouble for any boy. The first few years of his school days he attended the full term, which would be likely two, three, or sometimes as much as five months. He was required to work on the farm during crop time, soon grew to be considerable help; and as he did so, more of his time was required there, in fact, more land was taken for him. His father became tired of farming, having acquired a small piece of land, sold it to embark in the sawmill business down in East Texas.

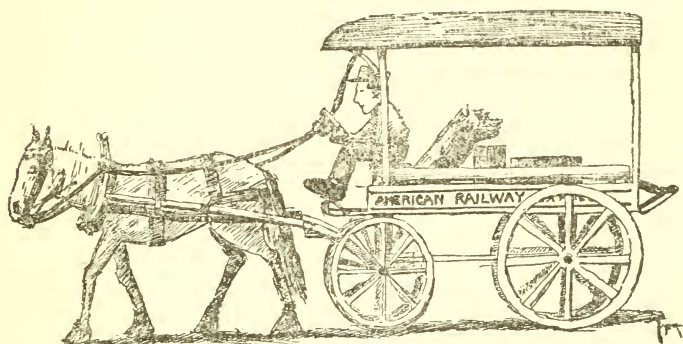
This left the boy without employment. There being no school near, he and his brother Royal were sent away to an uncle's, who lived near a fairly good country school. Here they entered school and remained through the term. This ended the full term schooling for John. His father lost everything in his new undertaking, and was forced to return to the farm without funds and with an invalid wife, to begin life again. Now all hands must work. Professional nurses were unknown to that vicinity, and it would have made little difference if they had been plentiful, because there were no funds to pay for such services. Therefore, it became a part of John's duty to help, and often to wholly prepare the family meal. And there were cows to care for, and many other chores. Withal, John was kept quite busy that year. His father did well on the rented farm, but only remained one year, moving to town for the purpose of educating the children. He managed to keep the children in school for two or three years, but the family expense increased faster than his income, so he was compelled to send John to the farm after the holidays each year to help keep down the expense. After that John never attended a full school term; from September until Christmas was his school year; after the holidays to the farm, for several years.

Tiring of the farm work, John secured a position with the editor of a weekly newspaper. He agreed to work three months for twenty-five dollars. At the end of that time, if his work was satisfactory and everything else suited, he would receive ten dollars per month until such time as he became an efficient printer, when he would be eligible to as high a salary as twenty dollars per month; and, perchance he became foreman of the office, he would receive thirty dollars per month. Well, this looked bright for John. He worked in that office for three years and worked nights a great deal. From this exposure he contracted an obstinate

cold. A serious cough developed, and for a time seemed to resist all treatment. His parents became alarmed and took him from the printing office for a time. When John recovered, his position had been given to another boy, and he had to go back to the farm for a year. However, his knowledge of the printer's trade secured another position in an office in a nearby town. But here the proprietor was crooked and would not pay him his salary. John looked about for something else to do. His ambition to become a foreman in a printing office and receive the large salary of thirty dollars per month had vanished. It would now soon be crop time again, and he would have to go to the farm if he secured no other employment. But fortune smiled upon John once more, and he was clerking for a racket store man at a salary of twenty-five dollars per month, with promise of a commission on the sales over a certain amount. The world looked bright to John on this lucky day. Now he would not have to go back to the lonesome farm, and toil all day and until late at night for twelve dollars per month. That was the highest salary he had received on the farm; besides, his working suit consisted of his father's cast-off clothing and winter boots, and you can imagine how they would look on a fifteen-year-old boy. We will say nothing of the diet at the farm house, except to mention the fact that all the butter and eggs were carried to town with the spring chickens and traded for snuff, tobacco and calico goods to make clothing for the family.

But to return to his new position, everything went well. He pleased his new employer, and soon he was a fairly good salesman. Here he developed some capacity for making friends. His salary and commission now net him about thirty dollars per month. He was well pleased and in good spirits. But John made a mistake when he resigned to accept a position with the express company to drive the wagon at forty dollars.

The express agent had a brother who was out of employment, and when John had held his new position about three months he was asked to resign in favor of the brother. Two days later, however, John was made baggage agent at the same railroad station at a salary of forty-five dollars per month. When he went to sign the pay roll for his first month's pay, he was much humiliated to find the word "porter" after his



"John Wilton, Express Driver"

name on the roll. But that was not to humiliate him long. The agent who employed him at the station had previously received instructions from the superintendent of the road to give the place to a negro, who had long worked for the official when he was filling lower positions with the company. The agent came near losing his place trying to hold John on the job. So one fine day in May John was informed that his place had been given to the negro. By this time he had made some friends and developed some courage and self-confidence. He was not long getting back with his old employer, the racket store man. In September following his re-employment there, he was sent to a

neighboring town with a stock of racket goods. Now John was the boss, had full charge of the business, with from one to three men working for him. John was now in his nineteenth year, and getting half of the profits of the business, which netted him considerably the largest income he had ever enjoyed. Besides, his father had begun to get back on his feet again, and John's assistance was not needed for the family.

Neither John nor his employer had dreamed that their associations in a business way were so near to an end. Both had been planning how it would be best to conduct the business for the next year,—whether to leave the new business at the other town or to ship it back until the fall season should return. Many times the matter had been discussed. It must be remembered that John was to some day become a physician, and during all these years had constantly kept with him a book called "Anatomy," and frequently studied it at idle moments and when he would be out of employment. John had now arrived at the age where it was time for him to make the start towards his life's profession. But he had given it little thought, was gliding easily along in a financial way, and for the first time in his life was really enjoying himself. He had begun to realize that he was of some use in the world, that something depended upon him, that he was a factor in the business world. All this made him take his responsibility proudly, inspiring self-confidence and decision to a marked degree.

John had an uncle who was a physician, and who was then practicing his profession in a small town not far away. He was preparing to go away for another course of lectures to begin in the early spring time, over in old Kentucky. He came up to visit John in the town where he was running the little racket store. Whether it was his intention before leaving home to persuade John to go with him or not was never known. The

matter was broached to John in an incidental way. The subject was pursued with vigor, however, until he began to seriously consider the matter. He, like most boys, had failed to save up any funds to speak of, therefore a great obstacle arose to his mind, and



“John Wilton, Baggage Master”

one that appeared insurmountable. So John was compelled to give it up for the present. He could see no way out except to wait for more favorable conditions. This was the first time that it had occurred to him that the time was drawing near when he must make the move toward becoming a physician. It came to him rather forcibly though, and he began to think seriously.

He hadn't the necessary funds and the time was at hand. What should he do? He had a good position, but no collateral with which to secure a loan. He could stay with his position and draw a salary. He must now miss his first chance, as it occurred to him. He assured his uncle upon his departure that he regretted very much that he could not accompany him, and that financial affairs was all that prevented his going. So John went about his work as usual, trying to forget what had happened. He could not. Whatever he might be doing, the subject was continually recurring to him. "Why didn't I think, and look ahead a little," he would say to himself. "I could have been prepared." "It's too late now," he said to himself. "I will be prepared next time," he muttered as he gave it up and tried again to forget.

Saturday's mail brought a letter from his home town, and addressed in his father's handwriting. His father seldom wrote to him. He was home every week or so, —only sixteen miles away. Before he had finished reading the letter a telegram was handed to him. From father? Yes. "Be sure to come home for Sunday," it read. The letter had made the same request. This was Saturday morning. John decided instantly to go, but could not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the urgency of the matter. He worried some about it during the day, and decided to go home after closing the store that evening. A train went up at 8.30. He arrived home before the folks had retired. All seemed surprised that he had come that night, except his father. There seemed to be nothing unusual about the home. His father said nothing, neither did John. In the usual way all retired except John and his father, there they sat until late. Now imagine John's feelings when his father said, "Well, let's go to bed, it's getting late." Not one word had been said to indicate the nature of what he was

wanted for. John was not given to mental worry to any great degree, but he could not understand things, and he began to have grave fears that something awful had or was about to befall the family. He slept little that night, and was glad when morning came. Things went on as usual on a Sunday morning,—children preparing for Sunday school, mother preparing the noon meal early, to enable her to get off to church for the morning service. Forenoon passed and lunch had been served, and mother had cleared the table and came out to take her place in the afternoon conversation. Why didn't he tell him what was wanted, John was thinking all the time. Along late in the afternoon the conversation lagged somewhat, when John's father, in an indifferent kind of way, remarked that his brother, the physician, had told him that John wanted to go to medical college with him in the Spring.

"I would like to go," said John, "but I can't."

"Why can't you?" asked his father appearing more interested in the subject.

"Well, I am not ready; besides, I am under obligation to my employer; there are several reasons."

John well knew that there was only one real reason. He was ashamed to confess the real reason, yet he knew that his father must know that he had wasted the greater part of what he had been making. In fact, it was evident already that his uncle had communicated with his father on the subject, and that he probably knew the whole conversation that took place when his uncle visited him the week before. But he had given up the idea of going at this time anyway, and so pretended that there were several reasons why he could not go. Now John's father begins to go over matters with him.

"You are now approaching your majority," said he. "You must soon take your place among men. The business world needs you, needs every man. You must

fill some place in the carrying on of the world's work, and you must prepare yourself in advance. Not prepared, you must take what presents. Soon you will want to settle down to something. It is important that you decide immediately, and begin your preparation. The longer you wait, the later in life will you be able to begin whatever your undertaking may be. Besides, procrastination might rob you of your opportunity to do something."

"I am afraid that it has already," ventured John, at this juncture.

"No, it hasn't," enjoined his father, "and you should not concede that matter for years yet, should you keep your health. Everything indicates that you have long since decided to become a physician, and your uncle is anxious to have you go with him. It is the proper time as for your age; in fact, it seems the opportune time of your life, considered from every viewpoint. There is no reason why you should not get ready and go with your uncle."

Well, it was now up to John to tell his father the real reason, why he could not go, full knowing that his father already knew. But John was thus forced to admit that he hadn't the necessary funds. He said it. Of course, he received a little scolding, but John was greatly relieved when it was over, and was soon made jubilant by the news that his father had made arrangement to borrow the money and start him off to college. He had hoped to repay this and send other money as it might be needed through the term. Now all was plain why father wanted him home for Sunday.

The train ran late that carried John back to his place of business, but that only gave him more time to talk matters over with the family, and to see other friends about his home town. Everything now was settled for him except to inform his employer, make an inventory, and ship the goods back to headquarters. Early next

morning found him busy at the store,—one thing uppermost in his mind, going to become a doctor. So elated was he that the enormity of the undertaking gave him little concern. “Going to be a doctor.” All day long that was constantly passing through John’s mind. Little did he realize what he was undertaking; how many long years it would be before he would or could reasonably expect to be much more than just a student, called “Doc.” He never liked the dub “Doc” in his life, and, while he knew that that would be his everlasting inheritance, it was not troubling him any now. “Going to be a doctor.” His mother had said of him often that he was a natural physician, and now he was to have the chance. He told his clerks about it during the day, and frequently some little matter was adjusted preparatory to packing up the stock for shipment. He informed his employer of his intentions the following Sunday, and before the week had ended the stock was packed and shipped back to its owner. His employer regretted to give him up, but wished him well in his new undertaking.

JOHN AND HIS UNCLE OFF TO COLLEGE

A few days' preparation, and John and his uncle were speeding on their way to the old city in Kentucky where they were to enter medical school. In due time they arrived, and were a day ahead of the opening of the classes. The necessary arrangements for a boarding place, and they were off to the Dean's office to matriculate. Everything done, and they were among the first to be assigned seats on the first morning. Nothing of unusual interest happened to John during his first course of lectures. He was a close student and worked very hard, and each day he could realize more and more what lay before him, and between him and even graduation.

Early in June the class began to prepare for the final examinations of the graduating class. The lectures were principally directed to these matters, and John's finances had run very low. His father had sacrificed much to furnish him, and he decided to return home, which he did immediately. All were glad to see him back home again, and, of course, he was glad. Everything went well and everybody seemed happy. Summer picnics were frequent, and John really enjoyed himself.

BEGINNING OF HARDSHIPS

It now dawns upon John that he is without funds, no employment, and his clothing beginning to show the wear, and he could not think of asking father for more money; and as for being a doctor, he was hardly well into the making. He knew no pharmacy: if he had a situation, he would be of no use to a druggist. Not yet twenty years of age, what could he do to earn sufficient money to repay his father, and ever get back to college? John was now in real trouble. For the first time in his life he was really worried. Things looked dark for him. He longed for his old position again. He thought of how he used to have plenty of money, clothes, and all the things that young boys cherish. If he had that position back again, he felt sure that no lure of a doctor's life could induce him to give it up. When he would think of asking for the place back, his pride would smite him, and he feared that they would say that he had failed in his undertaking. But he must do something. It would be the same whatever he did. Therefore he mustered courage to ask for his former position with the racket store man. John felt blue when his former employer told him that he could not use him. He had all the help that he needed, and besides he wanted some one who wanted to remain in the business indefinitely, as they would make better help than some one who only intended to remain there a short time, and had their mind on another line of business.

Now John was more discouraged than ever. He felt sure that it would be easy to get the old place back. And something happened while talking with his old employer that made John feel what he had feared.

He was asked if he intended to quit his medical studies. Now he felt sure that every time he asked for employment they would wonder, if they did not ask the question, if he had failed in his undertaking, or intended to quit the study of medicine. That hurt. He could not stand the idea of being accused of failing. He would not think of it. He would try to get in with a physician who might help him along in many ways, and pay him something. So he set about at once to investigate. The doctors all were very cordial to him, but they did not need any help. He would be permitted to stay in the office, go about with them to see their patients, but could not pay for any help. So on every hand he seemed to be doomed to failure. Each night in restless meditation new hopes would rise, but to be blasted before the ending of the morrow. "I'll go before the district Medical Board, and get a license to practice medicine. I'll not ask for another position." This was John's resolution. The Board would not meet again for several months, and the examination fee had to be forthcoming. More trouble for John. How would he get the money? He made his intention known to his father and he arranged for the examination fee.

The Secretary of the Board lived in his home town and was a friend of John's, and readily agreed to call the Board together especially to examine him. Meantime a friend of his, a physician, took John in charge, coaching him for the examination. The day came and passed, and John made a high grade in his examination, passed, and was issued a certificate with full authority to practice medicine any place in his home State. With the best wishes of the Board of Medical examiners and a small certificate signed by them neatly folded in his hand, John almost ran home. It was entirely too far to go around to the gate. He made one leap and was

over the back fence, hit the ground running. Another step, and he was showing his certificate to his mother. "I am all right now. I'll practice medicine. Don't want any job. I am a doctor."

Now the law was that applicants before that Board



"I'm all right now. Don't want any job. I'm a Doctor"

must be of lawful age,—twenty-one years old. The Secretary of the Board knew John's age, but said nothing about it. John heard one member of the Board say, as he was leaving the room, that he was a little the youngest kid that he had ever helped to turn loose on an unsuspecting public. Another said that he noticed that he was cautious, and he might not help a patient much, but that he wouldn't hurt one. And

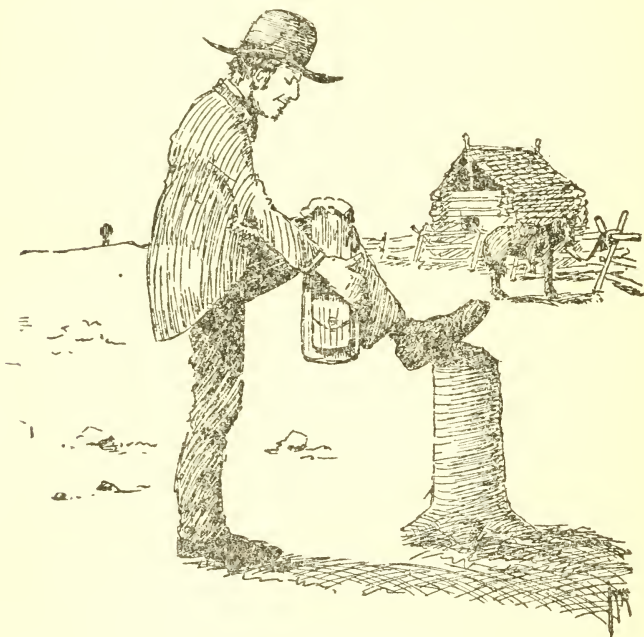
John learned for himself later that he was no danger to an unsuspecting public, as the Board member had put it. On the contrary, the public knew how to take care of themselves. When they needed a doctor, they sent for one whom they had known, old and experienced. John had little opportunity to hurt any of them for a long time.

JOHN LOOKS FOR A PLACE TO PRACTICE MEDICINE

Armed with a certificate of full authority to practice medicine, a thirty-five-dollar pony bought on credit, a half dozen suits of clothing half worn out, and sixty-five cents in cash, John left home to look for a location to practice his profession. Not yet twenty years old, looking still younger, with no money to pay board or buy horse feed, it's no wonder he had trouble finding a place where he and his financial conditions were acceptable. Twenty-five miles into the sticks he went, for he had to go as far as possible from any other physician to get a chance to practice. He knew that. Finally he came to a place where a doctor had once lived and had been killed, so it appeared to be a good prospect for John. The old man was a ginner, and had a large family and a small house. He had no horse feed, but would board him on credit; wanted to know how old John was, and was informed that he was about twenty-two. The old man was not easily fooled, and asked him if in reality he was not "about" nearer eighteen than twenty-two. They both laughed and did not enter further into the discussion of his age. He was shown a little room out in the yard where the other doctor had kept a small office. Now he had a place to stay, but nothing to feed a horse. Some shucks and old straw made up the horse's feed for a day or so.

A neighbor heard of the new doctor and through curiosity came over to see him. Then Saturday came, and all the neighborhood came in to get corn ground into meal for the week's supply. John was treated cordially, and was consulted upon many chronic ailments that in course of time might have to be treated.

Several offered to divide horse feed with him. The new crop would soon be in, and everybody would have plenty of feed. Nearly all of the neighbors remarked about the new doctor's youthful appearance. Several wanted to know if he had come among them to stay



“Doctor John Wilton”

and be one of them, or would he stay awhile until he could do better and go away as some others had done. Of course he assured them that, if he could make a living, he intended to stay among them. All these old farmers and the ginner or miller (he was both) had children, boys and girls that looked to be much older than the young doctor. It seemed to interest them

how John could prepare and get to be a doctor so young. This thing was continually being discussed. There didn't seem to be any doubt but that he was really a full fledged doctor, but it seemed wonderful that he could become one so young.

All this got old to John, but he could not say or even show his annoyance. He must look pleasant and be agreeable on all occasions, he must make friends of all those old horny-handed farmers, for with them and in them lay all his prospects. If they used him and helped him, he would succeed; and, if they did not, he must fail. Naturally John was not a good mixer, but he realized that he must cultivate that all important quality. He did it to a marked success. He made lots of friends among them, and after a while they began to venture to send for him when there was not much the matter with them.

But the old ladies would look over their glasses at him when he would go to a place for the first time. They didn't like his looks. Besides, John knew that most of them knew more in a minute about the practice of medicine than he would know for some years to come. Besides, he knew that whether he would make a second visit to that place or not depended largely upon the old lady of the house. So it was up to John to devise some way of winning the confidence of the old woman in the neighborhood.

MORE TROUBLE FOR THE YOUNG DOCTOR

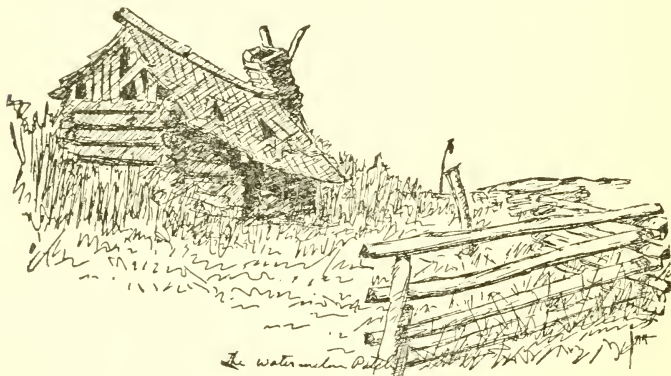
He was soon at his task, which led him into trouble. He was first told of all the faults of the other doctors who came out there, and he was expected to pass judgment on them in each instance. This of course they would take back to the other doctor with John's indictment of them. Therefore, he was in lots of trouble from that source for a time, until he learned how to stay out of their gossip. He was frequently advised to get married and settle down, that it would help him in his practice. Also that he should marry some girl of the neighborhood, which would bind the neighbors to him in a business way, and no other doctor could come in and get his practice. One in particular suggested that there was a young lady living about seven miles away that would just suit John for a wife. She was pretty, smart and young. She could pick more cotton in a day than any boy or girl around there. Could cook, wash and iron and made all the soap for laundry purposes that the household required. She led the public singing and was only fifteen years old. The old lady was very much interested in having the new doctor meet her,—so much so that she had the daughter of the ginner invite her to spend Sunday with her. The doctor, not knowing what had been arranged, went away on some business and was gone all day. But it was rearranged for the following Sunday when he was there. John later learned that the pretty cotton picker and soap maker was a young sister of the lady so much interested. Anyway, John began to get acquainted with everybody, and would put on his half worn Prince Albert coat and mix with the young folks, and soon was doing a little work when the sickness was not of a serious nature.

Several farmers owed him small bills, and he collected some corn and oats and a little hay and a little money; traded around and settled his board bill with feed stuff, and made a fairly good start for a boy.

The greatest trouble now confronting John was the table board. He had been used to good cooking and something good to eat all his life, even in his father's greatest business reverses. They had biscuit once a week, on Sunday morning. They did not make them often enough to learn the art of making biscuits. They were yellow with soda, too much lard, and all together a soggy mass of half cooked, grease soaked dough. How anyone could eat them and ever live over it was too much for John to figure out. None of the children could understand why the doctor would eat the cold corn bread in preference, and they would discuss it around the table while each of them scrambled around for every crumb and fragment of flour bread, as they called it, which might have been left by some one who had eaten ahead of them. The old folks asked one day if John did not like biscuit, and was informed that he never ate biscuit if he could get any other kind of bread. The answer seemed to satisfy, and accordingly some other kind of bread was always prepared for the doctor. They were very obliging at all times and did the best they knew, but the fat bacon without a streak of lean was fried up into a bowl of pure salty grease, called gravy by the children, who ate of it ravenously. It would have been eatable boiled with vegetables, green or dried, but they did not appear to know any other way to cook it.

The cows had gone dry, the gardens had dried up in the summer sun, the eggs and chickens were sold to the tin peddler, traded rather for such things as the family needed. They knew how to make good corn bread, and with some new crop sorghum John made out until the watermelon crop came in. Then he would

go through the formality of eating with the family and hired hands, and then go over to the watermelon patch and "fill up." The melons were so hot from the sun that he had to resort to pulling some in the evening for the following day, and placing them where the sun could not get to them. A little log hut almost fallen down served him pretty well for this purpose. He lost several pounds in weight, and said that he believed he



"The Watermelon Patch"

would have starved had it not been for the melon patch that summer.

Meal made from new corn came in, and some fall peas and other fall garden stuff. Pretty soon the cows came fresh, and he lived high. The milk and butter and vegetables gave John a new lease on life. Now be it remembered that this ginner and his family were as good people as ever lived in any man's country. They were good and attentive to John, did all his laundry work just as if he were one of the family, but they were illiterate and knew no other way of living. They were doing the best they knew.

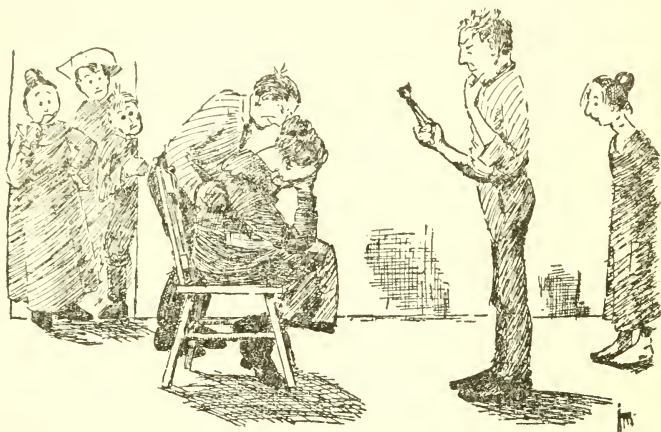
THE COUNTRY DOCTOR "PULLS" A TOOTH

The star mail route ran past the place where John boarded, and three times a week the mail carrier left mail at the little country post office half mile up the road from the gin. So also three times a week John trudged on foot up the sandy road to inquire if a letter had come from home, or from another place in particular which was not his home. He had one regular correspondent all this time which became almost as interesting as that from home. For three months he had been actually practicing medicine, and had not gone home even on a visit. All this time he held on to a lonely penny, a three-cent piece, a nickle and a dime. One day a man came along and bought twenty-five cents' worth of calomel to kill screw worms in one of his hogs, and paid the cash for it. This was the first real money he had collected.

One day a letter came from his mother containing a two-dollar bill. Was it possible that so small an amount of money could appear so large to a man who had attained the dignity of a Doctor of Medicine? Just how big they did look after he had them changed into silver dollars was never quite certain, as he could not imagine anything large enough for comparison. These two dollars, so enormously magnified, were carefully placed in a buckskin purse, which John had used in his palmier days, and there they remained until they had worn through the leather sides, and until he had made some further collections.

John was not averse to mirth and laughter when in his normal state; but when out of his natural element of association, and in the midst of financial depression and the professional dignity which he supposed that he must maintain, he found few matters that appeared

funny. However, he would relax occasionally and tell some of the funny things that would happen in his practice, principally jokes upon himself. He said one day that it was not half as hard to treat his patients correctly, as it was to keep from exposing his ignorance; said that he was continually in great dread of the fact coming out that he knew so little. Therefore,



"The Doctor attempts to pull a tooth. Broke it off"

he cultivated a habit of saying as near nothing as possible, and to answer questions with as few words as a courteous reply would admit of.

The postmaster's wife up on the hill had an aching tooth that summer, and was very desirous of having it extracted. People in that locality so far removed from where a dentist could be had never thought of going to anyone except their family physician to get a tooth "pulled," as they would say. Well, it was up to John to prepare to do the work. After quite a little correspondence he arranged to buy two pairs of forceps from an instrument firm on ninety days credit. In due

time the mail brought the instruments. By this time all the neighbors had heard that the new doctor had ordered them, and that they would be used immediately on the postmaster's wife. A dentist would have laughed to hear John explain that one pair of forceps was for extracting jaw teeth and the other for the front teeth. He had never extracted a tooth nor had a lecture on the subject, and of course, as he discovered later, he in his dignified ignorance had assigned the forceps each to wrong teeth. This he quickly learned when he tried to apply them to the teeth, and was compelled, then and there and before the same audience, to change his forceps.

"I acted a darn fool in the beginning," he said, looking out through the corner of his eye, and then away off into the dim and misty distance. "No one asked me to explain anything about those instruments. If I had kept my mouth shut, they would not have learned that I did not know anything about them."

"Did you notice it when I corked myself?" he asked of a friend who admitted that he had, but tried to assure him that no one else had discovered it.

"Yes, they did, that old lady who sat right in the doorway. She seemed to think that she was the demonstrator and that I was the student. She discovered it instantly, and she will spread the news too. They tell me that her tongue is as long and as rapid firing as Roosevelt's special message to the Senate. Oh, I guess I won't have any more use for the danged things. I shouldn't wonder if she might not have made a better job out of extracting the tooth than I did, anyway. I never got it. Just broke it off. Any fool could have done that," said he. "Do you know, I didn't want to take pay for that at all. I was so utterly disgusted with myself, both for trying to appear so well informed on dentistry, proving the reverse and making an absolute failure of extracting the

tooth." These facts must have been clearly visible to all present. But old man J. V., the postmaster, had a splendid trait of trying to make every one feel good; was very illiterate, and always started off with the phrase, "It's like unto this, Doc."

John did not make any charge, but he would not



"It's like unto this, Doc. You must have some pay for your work"

have it that way. He said to the young doctor, "Now, Doc, it is like unto this, you are a young man just starting out, and you must get some pay for what you do. I haven't any money this time of year, none of us farmers have any money until cotton comes in. But I have got plenty of sheaf oats right down here in the field. Come on and I will help you carry them home. They are worth fifty cents a dozen bundles. That's the way they sell everywhere. Come on," and he called his little son Jimmy to help.

John went with them, and it seemed to him that it was 200 in the shade, and he was in the sun. They finally got home with the oats,—not a dry thread on

either of them; chaff off the oats, dust, and all wet with perspiration. But the oats came in handy for the thirty-five-dollar pony, and the best of all, he was out of the bunch of spectators who came in to see him pull the tooth, and saw him a dismal failure and otherwise expose his ignorance. He was surely glad when that day was done. John meant every word of what he was saying when he told about it, and closed with a sigh as though the real incident was closing for the second time.

THE YOUNG DOCTOR HAS MORE TROUBLE

John told about another incident that happened where an old lady, whose daughter he was attending, appearing to get very much alarmed and attempting to alarm him, finally suggested that he needed help to take care of the patient properly. Not that he was not fully able to do all that any one man could do, but that it was a case that required two doctors. There was nothing left for him to do but to agree. Accordingly the old physician ten miles away was sent for, and after a long wait made his appearance,—a very fatherly old fellow who was almost too old to practice. The old lady met him at the gate and had a little conversation with him before he came in. John saw it all and wondered.

The old doctor was very courteous to John and would not examine the patient until he had had a talk with John. He saw what he was up against, and told the folks that the young doctor was doing all that any doctor could do, and that the lady was not in any danger at all. He then gave John some good advice, told him to beware of that old lady, and bade us all good day. The old lady explained it all by saying that she knew that her daughter was in no danger, but wanted to see if the young doctor was easily scared, and could be depended upon in a time of real danger. With this she was not content. She told John one day a big mess of stuff which the old doctor said about his ignorance. He believed it and, of course, was very angry. He told me afterwards that it would not have hurt half as bad if he had not been so painfully aware of his own ignorance. He said, when he heard it, that it seemed that the tooth pulling incident must have reached the old doctor's ears, and had inspired his

remarks. He surmised that the old doctor had no right to be talking about him even if he had heard all these things, and he continued to swell up bigger and bigger.

Finally he decided to go to see the old doctor and demand that he stop talking about him. He went to the old man's home and found him plowing in the orchard near the house. He walked across the plowed ground towards the venerable old man, swelled more with every step, until it seemed that his anger could hardly be restrained. The doctor spoke very cordially to John, and invited him to go to the house where they could get chairs; but, upon his refusal, the old man turned his plow over on its side and sat down upon it, as only a farmer would know how, and asked John to also sit beside him. But John had but one thing on his mind and he must tell his business at once. So he began telling what he had heard. The old man listened patiently until John stopped to get his breath, and to see how the doctor was taking it, when the old man in a low voice asked if that was all he had heard. "No," said he, and off he went telling the rest of the story, which was a long one.

"Is that all?" asked the old doctor, emphasizing "that." "Let's get it all, young man, and settle it all at once. I have expected this ever since I saw you with that patient, and warned you of that woman that day. I have known that woman for thirty years," said the old man, "and no one takes her seriously except newcomers." John thought he was going to say, "and durned fools," but he didn't say that. But he admitted afterwards that the fellow could have said all that and still have been right.

The old man continued: "My son, you undoubtedly mean well, you have within you the making of a useful man and a physician, but you have a great deal to learn. You have scarcely begun the learning." Right

here John thought that he had reference to his not knowing how to pull a tooth. He told about it afterwards, but he kept still. "I can help you in some ways and others can help you some; but you yourself must do the learning. But before you can do anything successfully you must first decide for sure just what you want to do, then start about to accomplish it. I presume that you want to practice medicine. Am I cor-



"I don't want to practice Medicine. Had rather plow my garden"

rect?" asked the old man as he mopped the perspiration from his brow and looked up at John. What a question to be asked of a man already practicing, thought he, but assenting to the query.

"Do you realize that it will require all your time and effort to make success of that one undertaking?" asked he.

"I had thought so," answered John.

"Well, then you will have no time to spend tracing up rumors and neighborhood gossip. If you intend to

do that, it will also require all your time. So, therefore, it will be wise for you to settle on one of these things to do, and that immediately for your own good. I have never said one word against you. I don't want to practice medicine. I am too old. I had rather plow my garden, as you see me doing this evening. I have plenty to keep me, so there is not a reason for saying anything about you." The old man laughed as he said, "You don't know much, but you know about as much as I did when I started out to 'heal a nation.' But you are young and can learn, therefore, as I would say, son, stop your folly, study your books, and attend to your business closely, and don't allow meddlers to lead you into this kind of trouble again. It will harm you." The old man's tone was soft and low, and made a great impression on John.

Now he was ashamed that he had listened to the old lady, or had harbored the ill feeling against the good old man who had helped him out of trouble in his first supposedly bad case. He thought of what a mess he had made of everything. This was quite as bad if not worse than the matter of the tooth and the forceps. He was thoroughly disgusted with himself. What should he do? The old doctor told him to come and board at his house and he would not make any more calls, but John was too ashamed to accept his good offices after acting so ugly, but he resolved to move to another location as soon as he could collect his little accounts and square up all his little debts. John said one day that he had been accused frequently of being timid in some things and had often thought that he hadn't sufficient self-confidence, but to think of the nerve required for a fellow to go out to practice medicine, fully equipped with one course of lectures, no library to speak of, no instruments, no money and but little judgment, there must have been something there to take place of a backbone. John smiled as he

said, "Well, I have made about all the mistakes that a youngster could have made in the length of time. I regret most of all the mistake I made with the old doctor. That taught me more than anything that has happened. Wonder what will be my next great mistake? Do you suppose that I will ever settle down to good reason and cool judgment and amount to anything as a doctor?" he asked of a friend one day.

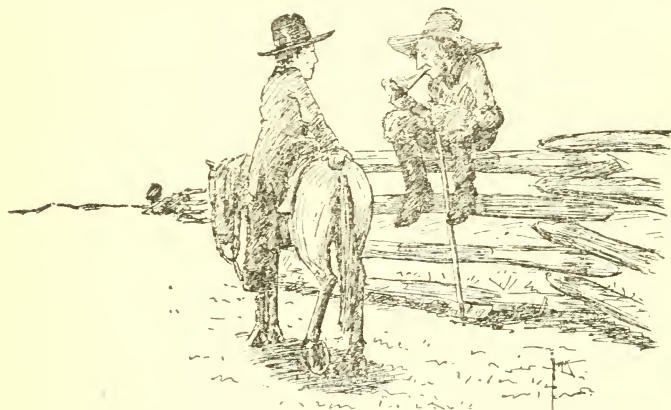
"My idea of a doctor is a good man, good to everybody, kind-hearted and wise, whose judgment is sought and respected by all,—a man with plenty to live on, whether people get sick and need him or not. This has been my dream of what a physician is," and he looked sorrowfully at the ground as he asked if he thought that he would ever accomplish his aim, and attain his own ideal as a physician. He was told that there was no doubt that he would if he but kept up courage. Why shouldn't he? He had ordinary intellect, was young, and from what he told of himself he was getting some experience. His farmer friend tried to boost his spirits some that day, more than ever before. He felt that he needed a little encouragement. His mood was reflective. Something was bothering him. Presently John straightened up in his saddle, stretched out his legs in the stirrups and remarked: "Maybe I'll be all right when I get through the process of making."

"Physicians are not made in a day," ventured his friend.

"Some are never made," said John, as he spurred his horse and started for his home at the gin. "I'll see you to-morrow."

His friend sat there in the shade of that bush for fully an hour after John was out of sight down the road. He was wondering what that young fellow had to really discourage him. A young man without any obligations, except the care of himself, but a few days

past twenty years of age, and already possessing a certificate with full authority to practice medicine anywhere in the great State of Texas,—now doing enough work in this little rural community to assure him enough income to take good care of himself and his horse. True, he was not getting any money yet, but no one was pushing him for what he owed. Everyone was going on credit at this season of the



"The Doctor and his Farmer friend"

year. "What has he to fear? Why should he be discouraged? Suppose he had made all those little mistakes he mentioned. That's nothing for a man of his prospects compared with me, an old rusty-heeled, bearded faced farmer, half my life spent without much ambition until it was too late to begin anything," his friend was soliloquizing. "But I will boost him good to-morrow. He will pass here again to see that widow's boy with the sore foot. It's too late for me to do anything myself, but perhaps I can make amends for my own lethargy by spurring that youngster into greater effort. He has plenty of ambition; easily dis-

couraged, but I can get him out of that. He has been coming by my place for some time, and always stops to talk awhile. He always tells me his troubles and mistakes, and I know that I can go after him pretty hard, and he will know that it is for his own good. That old lady —— has already boasted that she was going to marry him off to that cotton picking sister of hers down on the river. I don't know much about that, but it might not be a bad thing for him. The old man has lots of land and everything that goes with it, and only two of the children, and the old lady has already gotten her share some time ago. And for the girl, it would be a lift for her. But wouldn't that old lady have something to talk about if she should happen to make a match between her sister and the doctor? Her husband would have to eat cold victuals for a month, and milk the cows too. But I won't meddle with that matter," the farmer mused.

It was several days before he saw John again, and he was in pretty good spirits. He confided to him his determination to change his location about the first of the year. He was advised against it, but he seemed to have fully made up his mind on the matter. He was frequently seen about the home of the old doctor after his last talk with the old farmer, and they grew to be great friends. The old man regretted very much that he could not persuade him to remain. From that time until the holidays he saw little of John except in passing, or at the gin. He smiled as he passed in a hurry one day, and said that he had been pulling some more teeth and had had better luck.

JOHN CHANGES LOCATIONS

John went home for the Christmas holidays, and every one of his old friends met him gladly. He remained at home with his mother and sisters for the greater part of his visit. They were now getting to be almost grown, and very interesting to him. He said that he could hardly enjoy himself while there for thinking of having to leave. "But it's all in the process of making a doctor," he said as he betrayed a sickly looking smile. That smile betokened all that was in his heart. All knew that he was sick and also that there was no cure for his ailment. He wanted to go home and stay there, but to do that meant to fail in what he had undertaken to do. He could not think of that. He would not think of that. He went away for a few days and returned to prepare to make his move to the new location. Several days were required to make all the arrangements necessary. Collect a little more feed, and one thing and another, for it was little money he could get. Nearly all the farmers held their cotton for higher prices; and instead of getting what they might, which was eight cents, they sold later for three and one-half and four cents. This almost bankrupted the farmers. His farmer friend had already sold his farm, and the time was drawing near for him to deliver it to the purchaser, so John and he both left about the same time for their new homes. The friend went to the railroad town some twenty miles away, and John's new home was about as far into the country beyond. Everybody expressed their regrets for their leaving, and especially for John's going away. The friend went to try his fortune at merchandising, and, having a good partner who had had experience, he succeeded to a satisfactory degree.

But he kept up with John in his new location. The doctor would come up to the railroad town once in a while and made his headquarters there in his friend's store while he remained in town. John confided to his friend that he was sorry that he had made his move. That he was doing no work, and that the people didn't seem to have the confidence in him that they did where he had made so many mistakes and blunders. He liked his surroundings and boarding house much better. They lived more after the manner of his own rearing. But he was not making anything. His clothes were wearing out. He had only a few dollars after he settled everything at the first place, and that of course was all gone, besides the two enormously big dollars had gone also. His shoes were entirely worn out and he was wearing an old pair of boots which were ripped so badly that they would hardly stay on his feet. His friend took from behind the counter a pair of shoes, and told him to put them on until he could have his boots sewed up. He did so reluctantly. His friend knew how he felt. He would not say he was giving John a pair of shoes. His friend took the boots into the shoe shop next door and told them to repair them, but not until the next day. So when John was ready to start home, his boots were not ready, so his friend insisted that John go along with the shoes, that they were too tight for him anyway, and that he could get the boots next time that he came in.

John went away with the full knowledge that his friend had given him a pair of shoes and that he had accepted them, and he had not at the time realized what was taking place. The great need for them helped to heal his wounded pride. If they had been given him in any other manner than the one employed he would not have accepted them. His friend had come to understand him pretty well, and knew that he must be diplomatic if he should succeed. The boots

that he wore would be all right for feeding cows, but they were not in keeping with his other wearing apparel, even though they were half worn out. John afterwards laughed about how his friend managed to give him the shoes that he so much needed, and how quickly he recognized the trick after it was done. He also said that, if he had used as much judgment and diplomacy in his former location as his friend had done in the matter of the shoes, he might not have needed the shoes so badly. He would have been better satisfied with the former location and probably remained there. That was probably true. But it was too late now.

THE DOCTOR CHANGES LOCATIONS AGAIN

The Spring time came and passed. The friend saw John occasionally when he would be in town. The summer was rapidly approaching. He would look at John's sunburnt coat and frazzled pants when he could without attracting his attention. He wondered what was best for John. But the doctor had not asked him for advice. He tried to make him feel comfortable when in the store, and he tried to appear cheerful; but he knew well that John was sorely troubled. His friend did not feel justified in asking him about his plans. John told him, however, that he was going to his father's for a few days. He had been in his present location now for nearly six months, and had not done enough work to pay a month's board if he had collected for all that he had done. It must have looked dark to him.

It was more than a month before he saw him again. John had formed a partnership with his uncle, who lived as far away in another direction, and who had more work than he could take care of. He had sent for the young doctor to help him out in his heavy practice. John was getting all the work that he could do now, and things were looking brighter for him. He was not the same man that his friend had talked to on the way to his father's a month before, and whose clothes he had guardedly scrutinized with a feeling of sorrow in his heart. He wore a new suit of blue-black alpaca. Although he still had on the shoes given him, he had a new hat and looked fresh and self-possessed, full of vim and energy, and glad that he was living. It made him feel good to see so great a change in the man. His friend really felt proud of John, taking some of the credit to himself. It never was quite plain

how he became interested in John from the first. He was now gladder than ever that he had counseled with John when he first knew him and during all the time he remained at his first location; that he had encouraged him and had found a way to give him the shoes which he then wore. For the boots which he took away to have repaired he had never mentioned them to John from that day to this, nor had John mentioned them to him. He understood it all and was glad of it. Along that Fall his friend was down in his country on a collecting trip, and took a drive with him to see one of his patients. John told him some of his experiences down at the second location where he did no business. The man with whom he boarded was a miller and a ginner. He had a little black-eyed daughter about fourteen years old and small for her age. John said that he paid some attention to the little girl, but not in the way of attention to a young lady. He had bought her a copy book and some writing pens, and was trying to teach her to write. Her father often talked to him about wanting to educate his daughter, and that he could not because of his financial circumstances. One day he was talking about the matter out at the barn, when John suggested that the little daughter was very bright and that he had been interested in her since he had come there. Just here something happened that caused the conversation to be abruptly terminated for a few moments when the father half turned around and remarked that she was real young, but that he supposed she would be better off married than with what he might be able to do for her. They looked at each other. John looked at him in an effort to catch his meaning. Nothing more was said, but they went immediately to supper. He said that he had studied ever since to try to conclude what was meant. Just recently he had decided that the father had thought that he was trying to ask for the girl,

and that his heart had failed him. The old man was evidently trying to help him out in the matter. Many little things that happened after that served to convince him that his conclusion was correct.

"I can't see why so many are interested in my getting married. I am more interested in making a living just now. If people will help me get started in business with half the vigor and earnestness that they seem willing to help me in my matrimonial affairs, I might be ready some day to think of such a matter," said the doctor. John looked serious as he said this. He had been thinking along that line, with some fond hopes, but he dared not say such things at any place he had been. And besides that he was in no way prepared to get married. His education was not finished, nor could he hope for it at any early date if he had the necessary money. He could only think upon the matter with solemn regrets. He said one day that he could not see what any girl wanted with a medical student for a husband. No money, no income, and only an intimation of an education. It occurred to him that any sturdy farmer boy with a horse and a plow would be a better prospect for a living than a medical student.

"Those so-called uneducated farmer girls are deserving," said John as he rose up full of animation. "When it comes to managing a small income and getting along, they beat the world. Let me tell you about what one of them did for me. My old puff bosom shirts were all worn out. I mean the puff part was. The balance of the shirt was good. That girl brought my shirts back that week with new bosoms in them and puffed just like they were before. Now can you guess how that pleased me when I had no other shirts. She told me that she had made them from some old goods. The next day one of the small children told me that Mollie made my shirts from one of her petticoats. Now what

do you think of that! And I was not a bit ashamed to walk around with part of her petticoat forming the most conspicuous part of my shirt." John's voice gradually fell as he finished the sentence. His friend rode with him all afternoon, and the conversation ran more to the present than to the past or future. He was engrossed with his work and at it in earnest. He intimated before the day was gone that he had some matrimonial plans, but so remote was the realization of them that he did not dwell upon the subject.

THE DOCTOR PREPARES TO RETURN TO COLLEGE

Things went well with John for a year or two. He and his uncle both were kept busy for the greater part of the time. When they were not busy, they enjoyed the rest. They were congenial partners, and his aunt was as jolly and young as any of the trio. His uncle was not much his senior any way. Having been the youngest brother of John's father and an orphan, they were reared together and always appeared more like two brothers than otherwise. The time now was drawing near when John must make arrangements to finish his medical education. He had paid up about all his indebtedness incurred for his first lectures, and had again begun to wear fairly good clothes. He had made the acquaintance of young people in his neighborhood and attended the entertainments. He was getting a degree of pleasure out of life, but there remained with and in him a full realization of what still lay before him,—a mighty undertaking, the attainment of which meant many months of hard study, as many months of boarding house fare, and perhaps more cash than he could muster. But he must be up and doing. The Fall came with its short collections caused by short crops and low prices. After everything was paid there was not sufficient funds for his expense to school that winter. He must go that winter if he expected to graduate under the three-year system. All the schools had sent out their announcements that after the coming session they would adopt the four-year system. If he failed to get off that winter, it meant possibly several years before he could graduate. He must go, that was settled in his mind. The next question was where and how to get the money. An effort to secure a loan made it clear to his mind that it would be no easy

task. He went out to make another effort to collect some. On the trip an old sturdy farmer, after getting offended at being asked for his small balance, proposed to help him raise the necessary funds after John had explained to him why he had found it necessary to push collections. Now he felt jubilant over the prospects. A day was set for the raising of the loan. The farmer knew a wealthy widow near there where he could go with some land notes which he had, and get all the money he wanted. He was willing to put up the land notes to secure the loan. The day came, and they were off, going in John's buggy. About ten minutes was required after arriving at the home of the widow to learn that all her money was out, and that she could not collect enough for her own use. The farmer knew of a wealthy farmer across the river who had money to loan and had let him have money once upon a time. The next day they crossed the river to see the farmer money lender. Here they met the same fate.

"Well," said the farmer, "we will go up to your home town. I know that I can get it there at the bank." Forty miles through the country, but they started in the buggy. The bank was not letting out any money that far from home. John was discouraged and disgusted. The banker, after refusing the farmer the money, and learning what was wanted with it, went to John's father and offered to let him have what he wanted for the purpose, but did not want the farmer to have anything to do with the loan. He knew the farmer, and had had trouble with him, and John learned later that he might have secured his loan at the first place they went if he had only left the farmer out of the deal. He was puzzled to know what to do. He must go to school that winter if possible. He would not ask his father to again borrow money for his education. He did not know how to get rid of his

would-be friend, the farmer who had been the cause of his failure, instead of being able to help him. He thought that the farmer knew what he could do and had promised everything that he wanted, so John in return had agreed to leave his new buggy in his charge while away.

The farmer still came every day to talk over ways and means of getting the money, but by this time John was getting anxious to get rid of him. He was badly in the way, and there seemed no way of letting him know it without offending him. In course of conversation one day, and in the presence of three other neighbors, who had learned the facts from him, he remarked that he had fifteen hundred dollars' worth of land notes which he would put up for a loan of two hundred dollars for his friend, the young doctor. One of them said that there was no use of that, just let us four sign a note and let him take it to Old Man ——. He will let him have it. Agreed. It was soon done and next day John took the note up to the old man and got the money. John said one day that he was mad enough to fight when he heard the old bragadocio farmer make the assertion about the land notes and the loan. He had already told everybody in the whole community that he was going to send the young doctor back to school and finish his education. The old man who let him have the money remarked, when he did so, that the name of one of them might have just as well been left off. Therefore the three neighbors, also farmers, really were the means of getting the money and did it in fifteen minutes. The other farmer, however, claimed credit for all that was done and came over at the proper time to take John to the station, and to get his buggy to keep during his absence. There seemed no way out of this. Now after he had learned all this from experience, there were plenty to come and tell all about the boastful old

farmer, and that the least he had to do with him the better his credit and reputation would be. Anyway John lacked two hundred dollars enough to complete his course, and after about two weeks' rangle and worry he had it and was ready to start. He went to his father's for a week before starting, for a visit with home folks. He had sold all his stock except one horse, which he left with his father. The week's visit was soon over, and, while thoroughly enjoyed, he was glad when the time came to depart for college.

THE DOCTOR BACK TO COLLEGE

One day before the opening of the lecture course John was on the ground ready for work. He had located himself at a boarding house and purchased the necessary tickets, including matriculation. All was ready. John had been out of school three years and was rusty in most of the studies, and he knew that before him lay the biggest year's work of his life. Nearly all the boys, or students rather, had taken what they termed an unofficial course, which really amounted to a full course. Therefore, to keep up and come out even he must do the equal of two years' work in one. But his health was good and he was strong in every way and did not dread it for a moment. There were about sixty-five students from Texas, and of course he would room with one of them. He really roomed with two of them; but one appeared to be more congenial, and was with him more than the other one. He soon learned, however, that he was very close fisted and really stingy. But he was studious and a hard worker, and that suited John that far. They studied together, went to school together, and on Sunday went to church together,—always together, as much for convenience as for anything else, however. The other roommate was not excluded at all, but did not care to go along. He was a splendid fellow, but had no preliminary education. He could scarcely read or write,—could not read well enough to get well into his studies. He asked them many questions, and always listened attentively when they were discussing matters. He appeared to be embarrassed because of his lack of ordinary school training. John liked the man and helped him all that he could. But with all his illiteracy he was no man's fool. He did not like anything about

the other roommate. He looked upon him suspiciously, and often became sarcastic so much that it became embarrassing to John at times. He ventured a word of caution on one or two occasions when talking to John about him, but the matter was passed at that. However, little things were missed from the room. The towels would disappear, toilet soap, a lather brush which happened to be a good one, and one worn out was substituted, socks and handkerchiefs were taken. No one could ever see into his trunk. Small amounts of money were borrowed and not returned. Clean underwear would be appropriated ostensibly by mistake and returned unlaundered. No trouble arose, however, and the summer rapidly approached and final examinations were near at hand. The illiterate one of the roommates was to be graduated with John; but the more congenial one, who was suspected of the petty larceny and who was so stingy, was taking his first lectures. He had arranged to stay with one of the professors and work his way the next year. John helped his roommate with his final examinations, at the risk of having his own thrown out. He wrote the answers on a piece of paper and slipped them on to the next seat, and they got by with it. Final examinations all finished, commencement exercises over, diplomas delivered to their owners, and three hundred and sixty-five medical students bidding each other good-by, was a spectacle to be remembered.

DOCTOR LEARNS THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS ROOMMATE

John's partner had been by his side during all these exciting days and up to the time of the departure of his train. He had begun to look upon him with a degree of suspicion himself and was watching him pretty close, but had made out not to have any disagreement at the close of the term. They bade each other good-by at the train and separated forever. By this time he did not think enough of him to write him and had already made up his mind to that effect. However, he complied with his request for the loan of a dollar as the train was pulling out of the station. He also knew that he himself did not have sufficient funds to buy meals on the way home. He had already sent home for fifty dollars, and would rather go hungry on the way home than ask for more.

It was after midnight when the train left with its cargo of medical information, to be distributed all the way from St. Louis to Dallas, Texas. It was a bunch of weary sleepers on that dirty day coach, for not one of the bunch could afford a Pullman. A weary looking set to behold as they made their transfer next day, and John was not the only one who was short of funds. Several were buying dry buns and doughnuts.

"Come on over and let's get breakfast," said his roommate, as he motioned with his hand towards the dining room. "Come on over. I saw you give that rascal the last dollar you had last night. You ought to go hungry a little while, though, for not knowing better. He touched me for a dollar also, but I didn't give him the last one I had, and I know you did." John went on over and seated himself at the counter,

and they talked about what had happened the last few months and especially the last month. The meals were set out, and they talked and ate.

"I want you to tell me now why you allowed that trifling petty thief to impose upon you for all these months. Do you know that you paid for nearly all his laundry and for all his handkerchiefs and socks for the whole time? I was continually afraid that he would get you into something before you knew what was up. He is a crook. I don't mean a big crook. He hasn't sense enough for that. But he is too stingy to be honest if he wanted to be."

"I had lost confidence in him long ago and was watching him, but didn't know that it was as bad as you seem to think," said John, as he finished his coffee and arose from his seat.

"Come on," they holloed, "all aboard." They both rushed out to catch the train. Within a few minutes the train was speeding along in full view of the Missouri River. They were seated together in the car and kept up a rather disconnected conversation, occasionally making a remark about the beauty of the river, then back to some matter connected with the college or class election, and again to the tricky roommate.

"There is one thing that I have not told you yet," said he. "I knew that I would have this opportunity on our way home, and that it wouldn't matter anyway whether I ever told you. You remember that you only lacked seven votes being elected vice-president of the class? Well, that scoundrel was playing friend to you and working against you every minute. Red Cox paid him ten dollars to get the votes of the building where we roomed. There were eleven of us, you know, counting you. Of course he would have done the same for you if you had given him the ten dollars. But he was helping to count the votes. He took them out of the

hat and called them out. There were several more votes counted than there were in the graduating class, two or three times I noticed. I kept tally myself and added them together. You know that you were fairly and squarely elected vice-president of that class, and if you had let me alone and not interfered, I would have exposed that rascal right there. And when I had done so, you would have been declared elected. I knew where the steal was all the time. You knew that you had been cheated out of the office, but you thought that the thief was another party. You should not have interfered. Of course I realize that you were trying to keep down trouble and only interfered in the interest of harmony, but it was unjust to the class to allow a few dishonest students to change the result of an election. And, besides that, he was not a member of the graduating class, had no vote nor right in the matter, and any member of the class had a right to object to his meddling or even his presence in the amphitheater at that time. It was all wrong, and I was not the only one that knew about what happened. It was much discussed after it was all over. Many praised you for your attitude in the interest of harmony, but some thought like I did, that you should have let the matter come out."

"I don't see why some of the boys didn't talk to me about it," said John, looking out over the broad expanse of the mighty waters of the Missouri.

"That's plain enough to me," said he. "The two of you were always together. No one could ever get you separated long enough to say anything to you. It was mentioned to me on several occasions that he was afraid some one would tip him off to you, and that was the reason he stayed so close to you. Even men who did not vote for you mentioned that matter to me. I only wish that this year's class would be the class

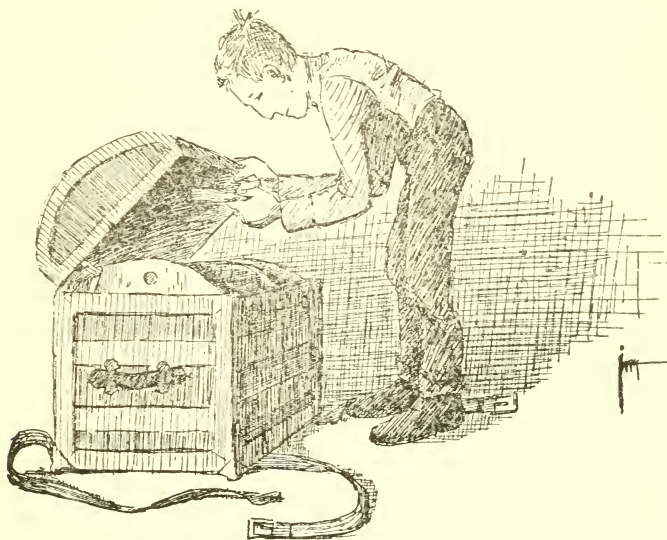
for next year, or that the next year's class knew all about this matter. They ought to be informed in time."

John thought so too, but said very little. He was thinking all the time what a fool he had been in trying to hold onto that fellow, after he knew that he was not worthy. He had full confidence in all that had been told him. He knew that it was true. No one was to blame but himself. The conversation died away gradually until both were nearly asleep. The clink of the car wheel on the low joints and the muttering sounds of other conversations in the car was all that was heard for some time. Late that afternoon John recognized his once beautiful bouquet of forced roses which had been handed to him with his diploma on the floor, and a five or six-year-old child standing on them, picking out the choicest ones. He wanted to take them home to show to his mother, but now they were bruised and torn to pieces. He took the piece of fine ribbon off and left the flowers to the child, and went in the smoker to talk to another one of the boys. While in there the train ran over a cow and came near being wrecked. Every one was jerked almost out of their seats by the application of the emergency brake. The brakeman and porter had to pull the remains of the brute out from underneath the car, and it was no small undertaking. It was eventually accomplished, and the train was soon speeding on towards the Texas line. During the night that followed John was taken with a violent headache and nausea. A young lady who was returning to Texas from Boston offered a dose of headache medicine which was very acceptable and which gave relief. The train reached Dallas the next morning, and there is where the Texas boys separated. From there they went in all directions.

Nothing more of interest happened on the trip home. John's schoolmate paid for both their breakfasts that

morning and said good-by, and they have never met since. The family were all glad when the doctor member was again with them. And this time he was really an M.D., though he more and more realized that he knew very little and that his studies had merely begun. A letter was awaiting him from the roommate left behind, saying that all were very lonely after the boys all left,—an ordinary friendly letter. It remained unanswered for several weeks. Another came from the same writer, asking why the first had not been answered, and saying that John had left an unpaid check to his boarding house madam, amounting to eight dollars. Also stating that he had paid it himself to prevent the people from having John arrested on the train in transit home. The letter went on to explain what would have happened had he not taken up the check himself. Insisted that he remit the eight dollars to him at once as he needed the money. This worried him for a time. He studied the matter over and wondered if there could be a mistake. He had paid every month in advance and by check on the Union National Bank. How could a check have lain out for a month before being presented for payment, and, too, by a boarding madam who was of necessity compelled to pay for groceries every day as she bought them. By and by the trunk was rolled into the house and opened, and the first thing that caught John's eye was a bundle of cancelled checks. There was the last check given for board, duly signed and stamped by the bank. That settled it. He then began to think over what had been said to him on the way home by the illiterate roommate. It was all clear to him now. John debated with himself several days whether to answer or not, but finally decided to just write him that he had in his possession the cancelled check in question and accordingly did so. Letter after letter came in quick

succession, containing many threats and dire calamities which might befall him if he refused to pay the eight dollars. To these he sent no reply. Finally they ceased to come, and John was greatly relieved.



"There was the last check given for board"

THE YOUNG DOCTOR STARTS AGAIN—A REAL M.D.

After a few days of rest and recreation and visiting among friends and relatives, John began looking about to start business again. He must now start anew, and in a new location. He could not, or rather it would not pay to go back to his former location because his uncle was there yet, and another physician had located there since he had gone away to school,—plenty of work for two, but not enough for three. He was soon located within about fifteen miles of his old place and about that much nearer his home town. Here he spent the remainder of that year and did good business, but at the beginning of the new year he returned to his old location. His uncle having moved away to the railroad town, left it looking pretty good for his prospects back among his old patients.

John had now begun to arrange for the closing of his matrimonial affairs. They had not been entirely neglected all these years, but there were so many things that were absolutely necessary before he could make much headway. Collections were poor that winter, and by the time he paid for his horse and buggy and board and the interest on his note he had nothing to start in with except old accounts. He went over to see his old farmer friend before he moved, to ask his opinion about the matter of his moving. Of course he advised John to go back to his old location where he had made all that he had gotten since he had begun. They went over to the hotel for dinner and talked things over. John told him about everything that had happened since he had gone away; things that people seldom write in letters, for he heard from John frequently. The waitress was setting out their dinner, each inspecting the different dishes as they were put

down as nearly everyone does. John pushed one plate away and drew another nearer, all the time looking intently at it.

"Do you know," said he, "that I have been greatly disappointed and greatly inconvenienced since I returned home, and it came in a way that I could not say a word about it. You remember that I left my buggy with —, and I left my horse with my father. I sold all my horses but one. Well, the first thing I learned was that my father had sold my horse during my absence. I had been forced to ask him to send me fifty dollars, therefore I said nothing. Horses were very cheap, but twice fifty would not have bought my horse. But I did not mention it one way or another to my father, and he did not say anything to me. So I surmised that he was hard pressed for money when I called upon him, and thought that I would just let it go at that. But it made it hard on me to get a horse without any money to start with. Of course, with a few dollars and some accounts such as I had I could trade around and soon get a good animal for my purpose. I went down to look after my buggy and make arrangements for some kind of horse, and found that the buggy had been torn to pieces three or four times and welded and braced and rewelded until it presented a dilapidated aspect. Now how do you suppose I felt when I saw it? It was comparatively new when I left it. Talk about nausea; I was nauseated. That word doesn't quite express my feelings, but I don't know how to express it any better. No horse, no buggy, and no money. I'll tell you right now I was sick as the day you traded me a good pair of shoes for that old pair of brogan boots. And by the way I want to say right here that there is not another man in the State of Texas who could have consummated that deal as gracefully as you did. I have thought of it a thousand times. But back to my story. I took the buggy over

to my uncle's and washed it and cleaned it up the best I could, greased the top with a meat skin and dragged it up to the front fence. About that time my uncle came driving up in his two-horse rig, smiled a little and said, 'Why didn't you leave it with me? I could have taken better care of it than that. What will you take for it, kid?' 'I'll give it to you for that old stack of bones over there in the yard,' I told him. It was that old Sam S. horse that used to come to town here every week. He was a fine animal then, but uncle had driven him to death last winter. 'Kid, I believe I will trade with you. I was going to loan him to you anyway, but I need a small buggy.' So he let me have the horse for the old buggy, and then loaned me an old roadster, or buckboard as we call them. Now you see what I had to start with. That was some rig by the side of the one I had left when I went away. Guess I was in luck to have any," said John, as he arose from the table.

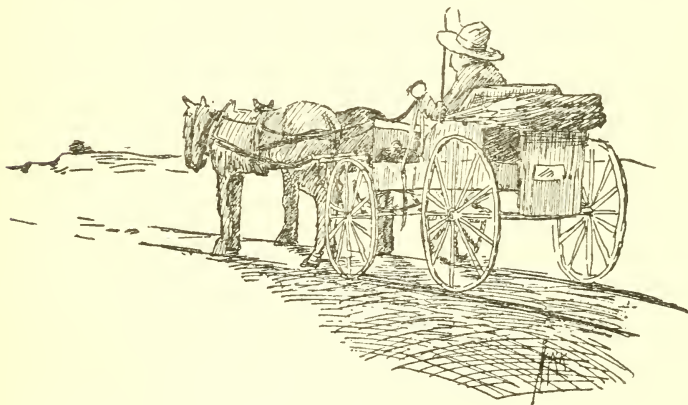
They walked back to the store and talked of things in general. "You know how many times I have been married in my various locations around here? Well, I am going to try to stop all such rumors pretty soon by pulling off the real article."

"Going down after your soapmaker, eh?" his friend ventured. He said no, and stopped as if thinking whether to let it out or not. "Oh! the black-eyed girl whom you asked for so long ago?" They both laughed.

"No, I am going to get married to a girl in the eastern part of the State; you have never heard of her. I mean if I can get enough money to go after her, which prospect looks anything but flattering just now. If I can get her out here, I can collect enough to live on the first year. After that it will be easy. I have arranged to board until I can build a house. I am going to buy a little spot and build my house on credit. I can do that. Several carpenters in the country owe

me bills, and one brick mason. I won't be out much for labor. I think I can make it go. Going to try it anyway."

His friend thought he could do it and told him so. John left for home late in the afternoon, and his friend did not see him again for sometime. One day in March John drove up to the store front and hitched. His friend asked him if that was the old stack of bones



"The Country Doctor's 'rig'"

he traded for. He said yes, but that he had traded around until he had cleared that new buggy. No one would have ever known the old horse,—as fine a looking horse as you ever looked at. There was not a prettier rig in town.

"I am fixed for work now," he said as he smiled and walked into the store. The merchant asked him when he intended to consummate that big deal, and he told him that it would take place about the middle of next month. Said that he hadn't got the necessary money yet, but he would get a little in time for railroad fare. "I'll get her someday," he said. "If I can't get enough

to go after her, I will send her enough to come on. That will save half the expense." He had been married some time when he came in to town again. Already he was building his house as he had planned and was in town looking after some lumber.

"I want to have a talk with you before I leave," he said to his friend. Pretty soon he went over to the store, and they walked to the back and took seats on the counter. "I have discovered already that a married man can get into trouble as easily as a single one. This is not family trouble, you understand, but just trouble that was unavoidable. You know that there are, and always were, imaginary differences between people who live in town and those who live in the country. A great many people living in the country pretend to think that the town people believe themselves a better class and act in a resentful manner frequently without any cause whatsoever. Purely imaginary. There is no real cause for it. But this spirit of enmity exists, nevertheless. Well, my wife was a city girl, and this they have all learned; and, while they are nice enough to me, many of them do not like her. She has some pretty new clothes, possibly more and better than she has ever had before. She was never married before. A girl generally gets more and better clothes at that time than at any other time in her life, before or after. I can tell that they envy her; I mean some of them. They are not all fools. That, of course, will make her unpopular. I told you where we had arranged to board until I can finish the house. Well, we are going to leave there right away. She is one of those illiterate envious creatures, and has gotten offended at my wife because she has not done her own laundry work, and refused to furnish fresh bed linen for the same reason. She has been talking to the neighbors about it, and has also told them that she would make us leave. Of course, we

are going and to-morrow. But just think of such ignorance. I have another place to go and will soon have my house ready. If I were not a public man and depending upon the public for support, it would not matter. But I know the dispositions of these people better than most men, and they are going to deal me some misery. For practicing medicine in the country it would have been better for me to have married a cottonpicker or a soapmaker. But I don't want to stay in the country always."

He soon moved in his new home and was a very busy country doctor. He was going day and night. Only once in a while could be heard that some of the women down on the river did not like his wife and had quit using the doctor. One old man told me that since getting married the doctor would not go to see the poor people unless his wife agreed to it, which she would not do. The old fellow seemed to think that it was an outrageous affair, and that the doctor should be summarily dealt with. No argument could convince him that it was any other way. He was light and an argument would not help things.

John's roommate had in some way gotten the name of the other physician located there, and had written a mess about him leaving an eight-dollar board bill unpaid and that he had paid it and could not get it back. The other physician, evidently being a little sore because John was doing quite a bit of practice, had begun to circulate the rumor. Of course that old man had gotten hold of that item of news and was making capital of it. During the fall season John's friend would see his team in town nearly every day hauling corn and such stuff as he was collecting and wanted to sell. His friend began to want to see him and find out something about the mess which he was hearing. He had also heard from one of his hired men that John was preparing to leave for a new location. He

sent John word to call the next time he came in. It was quite a while before John came in, though, and they went to lunch together and had a long conversation. John told all the things that had happened since they had talked last time. His face showed what he had undergone, both physically and mentally. His clouded brow told more than he would have admitted to anyone. He ate little that day, although they had quite a nice spread before them.

"It's a fact that I am preparing to leave," said he. "I can't stand everything and work day and night too. I have plenty of stuff, if I can collect what is coming to me, to pay all that I owe and to move and start again. I am turning everything into money as fast as I can. I hope to get away by the first of the year. If they will pay me what they owe me out there, I can do it easy and not owe a dollar to any man. There was an unfortunate thing happened in the summer which has cost me more than anything else. I came home with fever one afternoon, and told my wife that I would not go out anywhere that night unless my fever left me. Just about dusk a traveler came along, riding a two-year-old colt, which, by the way, had just about given out. I do not believe that it could have gone half a mile further. The man asked to be allowed to stay over night. We were not prepared to keep anyone, but, seeing his condition, we agreed to keep him. My fever ran some higher during the night, but cooled along toward day. During the night I had three calls, which I, of course, could not make. I could not have gone if I had not been sick. My wife would have been afraid to have stayed there with the stranger in the house. That might have been bad judgment on my part taking in a stranger, but that is customary in the rural districts. Now think of it, only one of the three got offended; but that old scallawag got very angry, and from that day to this he and

all his family, consisting of two or three boys and as many girls, all married, spend most of their time following up my patients and trying to get them to change doctors. That old lady M. has almost ridden that old gray mare to death trying to injure my practice. None of that bunch has been clear of debt to me for three years. This will be their excuse for not paying me this year. They are already saying so and urging others to do likewise. You can't make them pay anything by law, because they never have anything. When that class of people quit you and go to another doctor, you had just as well credit their account in full. They seldom pay a bill anyway. When they are in a good humor with you, you can get a lot of hogs and corn, a yearling or a cow once in a while; but that amounts to something from fifty or sixty families. And I am going to lose a thousand dollars' worth of that kind of stuff just on account of that little incident. My wife admitted to one of the neighbors that we had taken in a traveler that night, and they have added that fact to the stories they are telling, and some of the good people are thinking I did a great wrong.

"I have made another mistake that I plainly see now, and that is that I should not have let any one know that I intended to leave. It is causing those who are slow and don't want to pay to put me off in an effort to beat the bill, and every one that I owe wants his pay. There is the lumber bill and the brick, the drug bill and my note, which will be due in the spring. I could take care of all of them easily if they would only leave me alone and pay me what they owe me. That old man that is so busy stirring the mess he had circulated among those river people, he and his family together owe me enough right now to pay a third of all my indebtedness. I don't know what will be the ending. Even those I have considered my best friends are trying to embarrass me. One of them yesterday

offered me thirty dollars for my hundred dollar Jersey cow, and appeared to assume that I was in financial straits and would have to come to it. I had spent six hundred and seventy dollars on my place. I had ten acres,—the garden, cistern, barn, lots and everything fenced separately. Now that is what I actually put on the place besides the house and price of land. My good friend who owned everything around it on three sides refused to make me an offer on it, but went straight way and sent another man to me to offer me one hundred dollars for my equity. I recognized the trick at once, but could do no better, so I let him have it for one hundred and fifty dollars. What do you think of such friends as that? Would you stay among them and work for them? I can't do it. I may be at fault, but I can't see it now. Of course, by giving my home away, I settled the land debt which was not due for two years, and also the lumber bill. Ever since I sold the place, every fellow that I owed one cent has camped on my trail. When I saw what they were trying to do to me, I thought of all that was due me in the country and knew that I would never get any of it. I made them take corn and hogs and such stuff that I wanted to dispose of. I may have been wrong here again. But if those good people had not tried to crush me themselves, I could have still gotten enough to pay everything."

They had long since finished eating and pushed back from the table. The waitress had cleared the table and gone. John was gazing steadfastly at the floor.

"Shall we go?" he asked, looking up as if suddenly realizing the time of day. His friend said that they would not hurry. He asked advice on the matter, but could not be advised, as his friend felt a great deal as he did about it. He knew that John had told the truth all the way through, and his sympathy was with him. It is probable that he would have been anyway

if John had been wrong. But those people who had taken advantage of his embarrassment were good friends of his also and good citizens. John was nearly correct when he said that it was all precipitated by those ugly rumors which were being circulated about him, and when he began to prepare to leave they all became excited and anxious to collect whatever he owed them. When one crowded him, others just followed suit. It occurs to me that it was more an unfortunate circumstance that an effort upon the part of any one to crush him; excepting the river bunch, of course, they would have crucified him if they could have gotten away with it. They never saw a school house is the reason they have not known how to build one. They use a doctor more than intelligent people do.

"Well, let's go back to the store," said he as he took a deep breath, better called a sigh. He kicked a little to make his trousers fall back to place, and they started for the store. His friend asked him what his plans were for the future, and if he had settled upon any location.

"The first thing is to finish here where I am the best I can. I can collect some yet, and I am going to settle everything except that note. I will pay the interest on that, and try to get it next year. When I have done all that I can out there, I will then go to my father's for a few weeks, while I am looking about for a place to start again. That asylum place will change hands with the new administration next year, and I will likely remain somewhere near until I can try for one of those places. If I fail there, I will go on West, perhaps to Oklahoma or New Mexico. But I will be seeing you along for a year yet, and I will be back to town several times before I leave for good."

He ordered his team from the stable, where he had sent it to be fed, and with a friendly wave of the hand

bade good day and was soon out of sight down the country road.

The merchant saw people from out there where he lived nearly every day and began to ask them about things, and they all told it about the same as John had told it to him. The old man that bought his home thought that he had made a wonderful trade by having the money ready when the doctor was forced to sell; rather regretted to see him leave. He was a good and obliging neighbor, a good physician and all that; but it seemed that he had unfortunately gotten into a bad mess, and it didn't appear to be his fault either; more of a happen so than otherwise. If he had just remained there and not given any attention to the rumors of the river bunch, he would have come out all right they seemed to think. Some thought that he should have gone to the sick people, regardless of conditions at home. Some wondered why he had not paid his board bill while away at school. One thought that the rumor of the unpaid bill was the cause of everybody crowding him so for what was due them. But others didn't seem to think so because he had never had that reputation there. The best that I could guess was that they thought that what he had would not hold out to pay all, and each one wanted to be sure to get his. None of them seemed to harbor any ill will against him. It was learned through other parties that John had managed to settle up all his indebtedness except the note. Through the old farmer who tried to use his land notes everyone in the country knew all about the note and when it was due also. He had claimed all credit for everything connected with the affair. Now he begun to squawk and grumble around that he would have to pay the note when it came due. The men whose credit really secured the money had said nothing up to this time so far as could be learned. John had said already that he expected to be given

some trouble over it. He thought that the sureties would demand payment which they had a right to do.

The doctor had located in a small town not far from his father's home and was doing quite well. The sureties had talked pretty ugly to him and about him, especially one of them. He felt that he was in a position that he would have to take it with meekness, whatever they might feel disposed to say to him. He was embarrassed to the extreme, but could not help himself. Said he offered them his cow and his horse and buggy, but that seemed to irritate them the more; accused him of moving away in order to beat the debt; didn't intend to pay it when he made it, and such ugly talk as that. When they saw that he had done all that he could and they had finished their say, one in particular, they agreed that it should run another year. Interest had already been paid. Not long after that one of the sureties traveled all the thirty odd miles to tell John that they all blamed him for everything, and had accused him of having accepted his pro rata from him; that they had all gotten together and paid the note off. He thought also, that, inasmuch as he had done it all, gotten all the blame and had been accused of having received his reimbursement, it was only just that he should have it; and insisted that he be paid, whether the rest were or not. The doctor did not quite understand why they would go pay the note off after all arrangements were made to extend it. In due time a letter came explaining how he would be exposed and his business ruined if he did not comply with the demands; that he would be followed whithersoever he might go, and that there would be no getting away from this until things were made satisfactory. Another letter came and still another, until it became almost unbearable. He did not know what to do.

This persistent hounding continued until John in his desperation advised him to go ahead and do his worst,

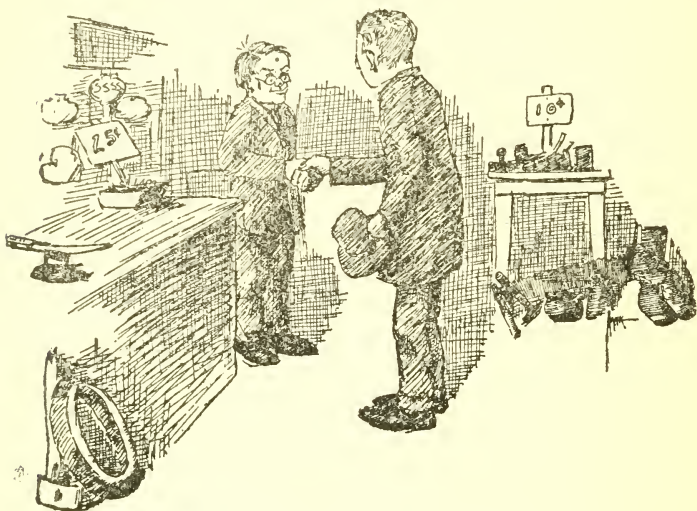
that it could not be much worse than what he was standing. The election passed off in the usual way, and all the appointments were made without naming John for one. That settled the matter of his going West. He soon settled himself in the north-west part of the State. He said that he was going to stop among the best and most intelligent people that he could find. If he did not get only one dollar's worth of work, that it would be for some one with sufficient intelligence to appreciate it and pay for it and among people who would not stoop to slander, and that were too busy with honorable employment to assist in circulating rumors reflecting upon the character of their neighbors. He only had a few dollars, but was going away. When he arrived there, he would have to remain because he would not be able to leave. There would at least be that barrier to his return home among his enemies. He said as he left: "I'll go among strangers, and I will make new friends; and, if I live and succeed, it will be among them, and if I die it will be among them. I'll shake the dust from my feet as I leave."

There was no doubt that he meant every word. Once settled in his new location, many things called for expenditure of money,—house rent and office rent to begin with. If he were to succeed he must be equipped equal to others in the same line of work. He had no instruments and no rig. It was settled that he could not pay cash for either. The rig he could get along without for some time, but the instruments he must have. After thinking the matter over for a time, he decided to write to half a dozen instrument houses, tell each of them the situation and the prospect of his being able to pay for them, and ask for credit. This he did. In due time a letter came asking for a list of what was wanted,—three blank notes enclosed for him to fill out to suit himself. Only one house replied to his letter, but that was enough. John felt jubilant at

the prospects of getting his instruments. The order was soon on the desk of the instrument man and was promptly shipped to him. One instrument could not be obtained at this friendly house, and it was necessary to look elsewhere for it. Some time was consumed in finding one where he could get the credit necessary. Finally he succeeded and made his order. It was to cost one hundred dollars. On his way to mail the order his attention was attracted to a jewelry store. Entering, he saw the same instrument the like of which he had just ordered, and the man was asking where it might be sold. He bought it for thirty dollars from a traveling salesman who had been on a protracted spree. His house had discharged him by wire, and he was selling his samples to continue his drunk. Just what he needed, and for thirty dollars too. The man wanted to make ten dollars on his bargain. How was he to get it? The man would not trust him for the price of it. He must have that instrument some way. He put his wits to work to solve the problem. He went down to an old second-hand man who had appeared friendly to him, and told him about it and what he wanted, and how much it would save. Asked the old man to buy it and sell it to him for a profit, and give him time to pay for it. He was willing to do this, but his partner was not. He told John to come back that evening. When he went back, he gave him ten dollars and told him to go pay it as a forfeit on the instrument. This was luck for him. He knew now that he would eventually get it. Next day the old second-hand man went to the bank and borrowed twenty dollars, and paid the balance on the instrument and turned it over to John. "Give me the first thirty dollars you make with it," he said as he left the office. He left hurriedly and did not give time for any conversation. That was so different from what he expected and so different from the way he had been treated in other places that

he could have embraced the old dirty second-hand man, and kissed him, too. He could scarcely contain himself that afternoon. He could hardly wait until time to close the office and go home and tell his wife. Surely his luck was changing.

Within a week John had paid for the instrument and



"John Wilton asks favor of second-hand man"

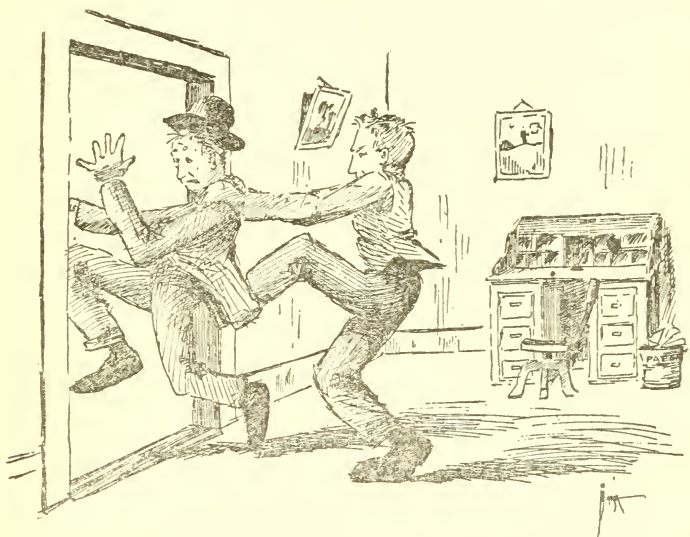
was duly happy. The prompt payment of the debt and his evident appreciation of the favor made a lasting friend of the old man. John had gone to church and Sunday-school and had met many new friends who seemed glad to know him, and was making new acquaintances every day. Everybody seemed pleased to see him, and he had no trouble making new friends. No doubt his luck was changing and the whole world looked bright to him. The old man at the second-hand store took quite an interest in his new ward, the doctor,

notwithstanding the fact that he had a large family of grown children of his own. He helped John take care of the notes for the other instruments if he happened not to have enough money to pay them when they came due. Soon he was doing enough business to pay expenses, but not until the last dollar had been spent and things looked blue. One time he began to think of taking a position with an old doctor out on Red River. The old man needed some one to do the hard riding. It really looked like he might have to do it. On one occasion he traded an old watch for a cord of wood. On another occasion his wife found a silver dollar where she had placed it and forgotten about it. It was the only dollar in the home at the time, and was the occasion of great rejoicing. His father sent him a box of crackers, a case of salmon and a ham about that time. Neither his or his wife's people knew how nearly stranded they were. However, as described above, they gradually came out of it. A year later he had made enough to furnish a nice office and take a course of lectures by borrowing a little money. In the Fall he had begun to think of saving some to pay that note which he had left behind and was making some headway. Simultaneously came four letters of threats and abuse; more came in quick succession. Going to ruin him in his new location. John wrote them begging them for just a chance to make the money. Explained that he would soon be in position to meet it and that they would not lose a cent. That was the only time in his life that he had really begged for anything. The more he begged, the more they threatened. They evidently believed that they had him where they could crush him again. They persisted. Even wrote to the county officers and tried to injure him; and finally sued after the threats failed to have the desired effect. After the suit was filed John wrote them once more and begged them not to proceed with

the suit, that it could not help any one and it would injure him materially. He also finished with the promise that, if they secured a judgment, which they would if they went on with their suit, he would use every means at his command for the remainder of his life to keep from ever paying one cent of the judgment. They had already injured him all that they could, and he had nothing more to fear. He felt that he would have an even break with them for once. They could not reach his friends to poison them against him now. He could tell his side of it if need be. He would never run from it any more; couldn't if he wanted to, so he would settle himself and take the worst if it must come. He felt that, whatever might happen, he could stay there long enough to prove to his new friends that he was honest if allowed a chance to make good. He worried for many weeks and until he heard that a judgment had been rendered against him for the amount, interest and attorney fees and all. After that he threw it off his mind and made himself busy trying to extend his business, making more friends and acquaintances and improving himself in every way possible. Every effort had been put forth possible to ruin him. "They had done their worst, they can do no more," John sighed with relief.

As the months went by, business increased, and it was not long until John had bought him a little home. It was small, but it was home. He took more office room and made preparation for better work in his office. He bought the new books and instruments as came out. The next year he took another course of lectures in the East; brought home considerable new equipment for his office. Business began to increase, and a better home was bought and in a better part of the town. The next year he took a month's vacation, the first he had taken in his life. Returning home he felt much refreshed and started again in his

work with renewed energy. Occasionally he would get a letter or two renewing the old threats. Once in a while some collecting agency would start in and fire a few hot shots at him, in their intimidating manner. Once or twice a local attorney came up and threatened to put him out of his home and take charge of his office and sell it. This attorney had become boisterous



“Puts Lawyer-Collector out of his office”

and insulting in his manner. He was therefore ordered out of the office, with the admonition not to return. He refused to leave and acted very ugly, whereupon John arose, took him by the shoulder and pushed him out the door and kicked him as he went. Up to this time he accepted with humility everything that had been done or said to or about him with reference to that old debt, but here it seemed that he had suffered enough, and he had rebelled before he scarcely realized

himself what had happened. He resolved then and there that he would not be humiliated in his own office by any one again without resenting it; that he would defend himself thereafter on all occasions and stand up for whatever rights might be his under the law. From that day on he was not bothered about the old judgment.

Early in that year John discovered that his wife had a tumor which would eventually have to be operated. This was giving him some little concern. Three children had come to bless his home, the youngest a girl. They were waiting now for this little girl to get large enough to get along without its mother, to have the operation performed. Conditions developed so rapidly that, when she was nine months old, they could not wait any longer. The mother was taken to the hospital and a nurse was obtained for the girl baby at home. This was the beginning of some more misfortune for John. Everything went bad for a year. Things looked gloomy to him,—office expense going on and no income because he was not there to attend to business; extra expense going on at home for care of baby and the house; hospital expenses and he on the road from one place to the other all day and half the night. He thought for a time that he would lose his wife, but she rallied and after a long time gained sufficient strength to make a trip to his father's to recuperate. She had been gone about two weeks when the home burned and came near burning John with it. It seemed that troubles would never end. Now his business was scattered and his home gone.

To say that he was discouraged would be putting it mildly. His friends and his banker offered him any help that he might need. This, of course, helped some. He collected the pittance of insurance which he had and began again to rebuild his home and business. The business, of course, came back when he was there to

attend to it, but the home was gone until such time as he could earn sufficient money to pay for it. The next year he borrowed a part of the money and rebuilt on the lot where his home had burned. From that time on he became dissatisfied with his location. The more he thought about it the more he thought he should go to a new country. He was now nearing the meridian of life and quite a family was growing up around him. They must be educated and that meant considerable expense. He was making and had made good money ever since he had lived there, but now misfortune had overtaken him and consumed it all. He remarked that he supposed that he should be satisfied that he got out with all his family all alive, but somehow he could not be contented since his home burned. He began trying to sell his home. For more than a year he tried, but without success. He advertised to sell or trade for anything of value in Oklahoma or New Mexico. Nothing came of it, however. Then he gave it up for a time and gave close attention to his office. He tried to reconcile himself to his home town and force himself to be satisfied. But, try as he might, he could not do it. He finally took a partner so that he might open an office in a town in Oklahoma. He had his office almost ready in the Oklahoma town when he discovered that his partner was an impostor, and that he was doing him and his business a great injury. That fact necessitated his return home to look after the office there. Again he tried to content himself with well enough and with the same result. His friends could not understand his restlessness and some of them ventured to ask about it. He had begun to neglect his office to some extent and also had been drinking at times. Later he drank more and more until he injured his business considerably. His friends became solicitous about him and called him severely to account for his conduct. He

took it in the right spirit and straightened up for a time, but gradually returned to drinking, but this time more cautiously. He would not drink during office hours, and his business did not suffer from the effects of it. One day he heard of a man in a nearby town who had a confectionery business to trade for just anything. He thought of how the business could be moved and that his home could not. He therefore went to see the man and pretty soon negotiated a trade. It was November and business was good in the town. He had quite a good stock of the kind and wanted to reduce it in every possible way by the first of the year. For two or three months John forgot that he ever was a physician. He was a small confectioner, but he was bent on getting the money out of the stock, which he did admirably. The new year found him loading a car with the stock of goods that was left and another car with his household and office furniture, all to be shipped to Western Oklahoma,—everything loaded and family taking the train for their new home, and John was once more happy.

THE DOCTOR MEETS HIS OLD FRIEND AGAIN

John went down to Texas on a visit, and to attend the State Fair and to meet his old friend. They were together for the greater part of a day. It was so crowded out at the Fair Grounds that they decided to go back to the city for their lunch. It was well into the afternoon before they located themselves in a beer garden and ordered what they wanted to eat. It had always been their custom to eat while they talked, and to have a glass of beer on the side had not been their pleasure before. The merchant was anxious to learn all about how things had been with him since he had gone to the new State to make his home. They ordered beer and drank it while they waited for the preparation of their lunch. John began talking about "wonders." "It's all a wonder to me," he said. "It's a wonder that I ever got to be a doctor. It's a wonder how I got any of my lectures. It's a wonder that any one ever took me for a doctor, or employed me after they learned that I was. It's a wonder how I had the nerve to continue trying in the face of the many difficulties which came up before me. It's a wonder that I ever got started in North Texas without any means. It's a wonder that I was ever able to get away from there without means. It's also a wonder how well I am getting on in my new place. If that is not a bunch of wonders, tell me what it is. (Better drink this beer, the lunch is coming.) If you didn't happen to know all about these life happenings of mine, you would be slow to believe it. I think I will write a little book some day and tell it all. It would be interesting to some young fellows, and old ones too, who had been along the way that I traveled. It might be a 'bore' to

them instead. You ought to know. I have bored you with it now for twenty-five years." He smiled a little as he began to eat.

"Did I ever tell you about the time the old lady B. sent for me in a great hurry about two o'clock in the morning? It was cold as all get-out. I hurried out and saddled my horse and galloped all the way there. There she was propped up in the bed, groaning like



"John and his Farmer friend, lunching together for the last time"

six bits. I hustled around to get my hypodermic ready with a quarter grain of morphine to relieve her pain. The syringe was not in the best of order, and I lost a part of the dose I was trying to inject into her arm. Fearing that I had not given her enough to relieve her, I hastily prepared another, thinking that I would give her only a part of it if she should need it. I waited about half hour and her pain had not subsided. I gave her the other dose and waited another half

hour. She was no better yet. I was puzzled. Half a grain of morphine and no results. I ordered hot applications and other means usually employed in such cases and was anxiously waiting. I saw her motion to her son and heard her say to him, 'Bring me my bottle.' She said, 'I must have relief some way.' I sat there and watched her take a half teaspoonful of morphine out of that bottle and swallow it with a drink of whisky. Now how do you think I felt sitting there another half hour waiting for her to get easy? Well, I felt something like a fool. I remarked about it at breakfast table next morning and was informed by my boarding lady that she used two bottles a week and had for many years. That's the kind of thing we are up against constantly, and it comes in a different way each time. By the time we learn all these things, we are old enough to die, and we can't drop our mantle of learning upon the next generation.

"You asked me how I have been getting along in my adopted State. Well, you know that I was a confectioner when I left Texas, don't you? I knew that, in order to get my money out of the thing, I would have to stay with it myself and work it out, so I did for three months. I had to open it up and make it a success before I could trade it to anyone. I entered the State and town a confectioner, and told no one any difference. Of course my people who lived there knew, but I told no one. My people were humiliated because I lowered my dignity to look after that little business, and attempted to explain it away to some of their friends. I was sorry to cause them this embarrassment, but it was all that I had to get a home with, and I could not throw it away; and to leave it in the hands of others to manage would be equal to losing it. I could make it pay a good living while I was getting it ready to sell. I was renting a house from one of

the oldest doctors in the place. He accidentally learned that I was a physician and came around to see me. He asked me for the truth of the matter and I told him. He forthwith pronounced me to be the biggest fool in town. He told me to close the business up or give it to some one and go on down to another building which he owned and take charge of his office and go to work right. He was going to quit practicing. I promised that I would within a few days. I was then closing a deal for a farm. The day before I turned the business over to its new owner, the old doctor came in laughing. He told me that he would whip me with a wet rope if I didn't get out of there. He would give me three more days to get out and get where I belonged. I only needed one more day. He proved to be a good friend to me, and aside from turning me over an office he sent me many patients, in many instances guaranteeing my work. He had been there a long time and people had confidence in him. What he said had great weight. My starting there into the practicing was comparatively easy and quick, owing to the help of the old doctor. I shall never forget him. I traded the farm for a small house and some vacant lots in town. These I traded for a nice new modern cottage.

"Right here I had some little trouble. It was rented to a bigoted banker by the month. His family was away for the summer and he refused to give possession, claiming that he had it rented for a year. I wrote him that I had bought it and wanted possession, that houses were scarce, and that he was not keeping house anyway. He did not answer, whereupon I wrote to him again. This time he answered on the bottom of my letter, saying that it was a very good place to store a good piano for the summer. This reply peeved me somewhat. I set to work to contrive some way to beat him at his own game. The lady from whom I had

purchased the property had her household goods stored upstairs and had reserved the right of entry into the house to look after them. She alone could enter without being guilty of housebreaking. I persuaded her to enter and move all the banker's household goods upstairs with hers, and while the doors were thus open I moved into the house. She was immune to prosecution for entering, and I could not be prosecuted because I found it open and it belonged to me. The banker was in the East at the time, and I had been living there two weeks when he returned home. I had learned that he was in town and was expecting him to come to the house, which he did about eleven o'clock that night. He drove his car right up to the door, and as he stopped it I turned the lights on in the house and started for the door. By the time I got the door open he had backed the car out and was flying down the street. He sent his attorney around to see me the next morning to find out what I had done with his furniture and to deliver a few threats. I gave them the true information of how it was done. He saw the point, and remarked that it was the first time that he had known of anyone getting even with Hooker. He sent for his furniture immediately, and I met him on the street in a few days, and he spoke to me and smiled as though he liked it. He afterwards explained to some of the neighbors that he had a very fine piano and could afford to pay thirty dollars per month to keep it stored; that Southerners were not accustomed to such instruments and did not know how to care for them. Several months after that he attempted the same explanation to me, halfway apologizing, and I could not help referring to the piano as 'that second-hand instrument!' Told him that I had put one like that in as part payment on my piano. He looked at me contemptuously and appeared perfectly disgusted.

but I held a straight face until he walked away, and I imagine he was thinking what an ignorant fool I was that I could not appreciate so fine an instrument."

John became so interested in his story that he had failed to finish his lunch. They ordered a fresh glass of beer and he commenced to finish his meal. His friend asked if he thought that he would remain at his present location, and he answered that he would likely finish his life story there. He finished eating and drank the remainder of a glass of beer and pushed his chair back to smoke. They got up and stretched their legs a little, and arranged their chairs facing each other, and lit their cigars.

"Do you know," said he, "that I have found no phase of life what I expected it to be. If a young man ever realized one half of the success which he fondly hoped for and confidently expected, he would never appreciate it. Why do not young men figure on the rough and rugged side of life in their dreams? Would it not be better? But they don't. When I was beginning to practice medicine down there where I first met you, I was told that I was too young and inexperienced, but that I would be better and people would have more confidence in my ability as I grew older. I was too young. This kind of talk followed me up until the last few years. Now I have children as old as I was when I began. My hair is not white, but is getting pretty thin on top my head, and I will soon be on the shady side, and now I begin to hear the story reversed. 'He is a young energetic fellow and just out of school,' is the way they put it now. 'He has had four years in a certain hospital. He is up to date. Studied in Europe.' By the way, did you ever think what a prestige a trip to Europe gives a physician? A doctor wants a vacation and has a few dollars to blow in. He takes a trip to Europe and visits as many big hospitals

as is convenient on the trip, meets a few big surgeons and returns home at the end of a few week's continuous traveling, much refreshed and enlightened by his studies in Europe. That's all right I suppose. Good advertising.

"But to revert to my subject. I was going to say that it will not be long until it will be my old age that will be the principle reason assigned by those who do not choose to use me. I suppose that it has ever been thus. Each of us find it as we pass along. I thought for a long time that I would surely be rich some day,—just as soon as I could mature my plans and have a few dollars with which to execute them. It has been this hope that has spurred me on until now I have given up that idea, and have contented myself to get a degree of pleasure from helping others and doing what I can for my family. To sum up all things aside from finances, I have been fairly successful, and I have had enough money for the most part for my absolute necessities. I have had little of luxuries, and it may be best that I have. I have triumphed over some of my adversaries at times in my life, and for the moment it seemed to give me pleasure; but as Bob Taylor once said, 'When we have triumphed by the downfall of another, it's pleasant for the moment, but after all there is a pang of sorrow that comes to our hearts in sympathy for the vanquished.' That is not his language, but that is what he meant. It seems to come home to me more and more as I grow older. There are many things in my life that I would change had I the opportunity to go over it again. I have suffered many wrongs in my life which I have long since forgiven, but I would feel much better if I could let the perpetrator know how I feel about it. I am not posing as such a good fellow now, don't get that into your head. But these feelings continually creep

upon me. I have done thousands of dollars' worth of practice for people who have gotten offended when I wanted some pay for my work. I have done as much for which I never expected a penny pay, but that is expected of us, and few people have any idea of the amount of this kind of work done by every physician. I have done all the talking as usual when I am with you. Let's get a fresh cigar and go to the hotel until train time."

That night John Wilton and his old friend of many years bade good-by to each other forever.

